Belief in prophecy is one of the oldest convictions of mankind – a conviction based on innumerable actual experiences. It appears again in our time in the form of precognition: accurate premonitions of the future.

Precognition is the most baffling of all paranormal phenomena even though it seems to the most abundantly documented and established. Clairvoyance and telepathy at least occur in our present time field. But precognition "transmits" information not only across space but across time fields!

The author's case histories (including personal experiences of his wife and himself) range through precognitive warnings, precognition of death, precognitive knowledge of trivial events, precognition of significant events, and longer-range precognitions.

No work of this kind could overlook the quantitative studies of precognition conducted by the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University and others. Osborn gives due credit to them but he makes this telling distinction between quantitative and qualitative research: "There are some who find their satisfaction in measuring and counting. The proofs they seek must be presented in figures. These they may have in abundance in the records of modern psychical research, although what they gain in precision they lose in quality.

The Future Is Now

by the same Author

OCCULTISM, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, AND HEALING

THE SUPERPHYSICAL

THE EXPANSION OF AWARENESS

THE

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1962

BY ARTHUR W. OSBORN

FUTURE IS NOW

The Significance of Precognition

UNIVERSITY BOOKS *New Hyde Park, New York*

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Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

TO MY WIFE whose steady
love, encouragement and judgment
assure me of at least
one reader.

Among all these perplexing phenomena there is one that is more perplexing than any others—prevision. It is established by proofs that are absolutely certain, but it remains totally incomprehensible.

Charles Richet

. . . but perhaps there is a pattern set up in the heavens for one who desires to see it and, seeing it, to found one in himself.

Plato, THE REPUBLIC, Trans. F. M. Cornford

These "Ideas" are not conceptual abstractions at all, but living Spiritual Powers which, as the Gita says "stand" in their own nature eternally and are reflected in the flux of beings, giving to each its form and its essential nature, not abstracted from beings but formative of beings, the perfect types and patterns of all things here below.

SRI KRISHNA PREM, THE YOGA OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

Each unit when at one with Me
Sees Me in all delights
For to his spiritual eye
I am one with My creation.

From an Automatic Script

King David sings, "A thousand years in God's sight are as a day that is past" for all the future and the past yonder are in the now . . .

Meister Eckhart

. . . thought, which is the product of time, can never find that which is timeless.

J. Krishnamurti

We do not have to run to the grocer's shop for our morning light; we open our eyes and there it is; so we need only give ourselves up to find that Brahma is everywhere.

Rabindranath Tagore, SADHANA

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Introduction

I have been compelled by the unusual number of precognitive visions in my own life to give a good deal of thought to the subject of precognition, the significance of which the author, Arthur W. Osborn, sets forth in this book. THE FUTURE IS NOW has the unique value of presenting a problem which is ever-present in our lives, but which modern civilization rarely recognizes. Modern materialism is, for the most part, satisfied to avoid all reference to the forces which would appear to influence our existence, but which do not fit quite readily into the picture of a purely material and causal universe.

Mr. Osborn's work is an excellent addition to the growing shelf of works in such areas as hypnosis, telepathy, clairvoyance and related subjects within the scientific category that is now generally known as parapsychology. In some respects, of all these aspects precognition is perhaps the most difficult to consider. This condition was well recognized at the Conference on "The Study of Parapsychology: Evidence and Methods," which took place in New York on December 12 and 13, 1959. The meeting was sponsored by the Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., of which

I have the privilege of being President. At this Conference, the noted psychoanalyst Dr. Jan Ehrenwald said that observer reaction to precognition suffers from negative, culture-conditioned prejudice. He observed that "apparently we can tolerate telepathy, more or less," we "can tolerate clairvoyance, a little," but "the most difficult thing for me to tolerate, intellectually, is precognition." Dr. Ehrenwald also said that for a person brought up in our Western culture such tolerance is difficult, "although in antiquity prophecy was a matter of ordinary belief; naturally, given our cultural bias, we try to avoid precognitive interpretation as long as possible, unless we are cornered by the facts and simply have no choice."

I am personally pleased to see Mr. Osborn's work in print because I can testify that I have been thus "cornered by the facts" many times. I do not simply "see" certain future events; I actually appear to "live" them. I find that it is easy for me to pass from the "now" into what may be called the timelessness of the future. From these experiences I gather that each one of us, as he moves through life, is both engineer and creator of his own being. Events in which we participate are indelibly recorded; at the same time, thought forms all around us are merging with our own—and, as is true of all creation, they continue to merge and divide.

The actual experience of precognition is difficult to convey because it so closely resembles an actual current happening. Thus, I actually appear to observe an event—an automobile accident, the crashing of a plane, the sinking of a vessel—and my reactions are quite normal; while I actually see the crash, note the chaos that arises and watch the disintegration, I observe the event in much the same way as I look at a newspaper headline or the television screen. At the time that I thus note the event, it never occurs to me that I have not seen something that has al-

ready happened. It is only when I read of the occurrence—days, weeks, months or years later—that I must acknowledge that precognition has been at work; then I am indeed "cornered by the facts and have no choice . . . "

While it is difficult enough to experience precognition, it is ironically probably still harder to define it to the satisfaction of everyone who takes an interest in it. At the New York Conference mentioned above, a philosopher of great knowledge and standing, Professor C. J. Ducasse (Providence, R.I.), did much to advance our understanding of what precognition may actually be. He said that we should not regard it as equal to popular concepts of prediction, predetermination, premonition, or correct guesses. Further, he maintained, instances of precognition are only those where the content of a dream, a vision, an experimental guess or a "hunch" actually turns out to "correspond to a later event." Professor Ducasse felt that nothing short of a detailed definition of precognition should be considered adequate. In his view, a precognized event must "correspond to the precognitive experience in a manner that is not plausibly explicable as chance coincidence, nor may it be due to inference, to habits of expectation built up in the past by non-causal regularities." Also, the precognized event should not be due to "the subsequent action" of the person who anticipated it.

In his work RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH (London, 1949), Professor C. D. Broad (Cambridge, England) stated that a paranormal event is one "which ought not to occur if certain basic limiting principles of our scientific and ordinary thought are valid without exception." It would seem essential, therefore, to rid ourselves of the prejudice of yesterday's scientific thinking which assumes that there can be no exceptions to the rules which we have established for ourselves and which are worshiped by scientists like so many academic golden calves.

In the years in which precognitive events have been recorded with some measure of scholarly control, two kinds of such phenomena could be observed: qualitative precognition—that is, events that could be noted anywhere, at any time; and quantitative precognition, which might occur under laboratory conditions, and could therefore be statistically evaluated.

Into the qualitative category fall most traditional cases. As Mr. J. Fraser Nicol (Arlington, Mass.) observed at the New York Conference, "Belief in prophecy is one of the oldest convictions of mankind." But it was the Society for Psychical Research (London) which first published a case of apparent spontaneous precognition in 1884. Mr. Osborn, in the present volume, ably summarizes a great deal of the material compiled by the Society; in 1934 the S.P.R. devoted an issue of its *Proceedings* to a compilation of these data by Mr. H. F. Saltmarsh as a "Report on Cases of Apparent Precognition." Mr. Nicol, in surveying a period of nearly seven decades of research, concluded that its indications are remarkably persistent in that "dreams are the chief source of ostensibly precognitive experiences."

Also at the New York Conference, a paper was presented that had earlier been prepared by Mrs. Esther Foster (Panama City, Florida) surveying precognitive data of a quantitative nature. For the most part, experiments in precognition have been undertaken by researchers associated with the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University, of which Dr. J. B. Rhine is Director. Both quantitative and qualitative research owes much to the imagination of the late Mr. Whately Carington, British psychical researcher, whose work may well be decisive in stimulating future activities in this field.

In his presentation to the New York Conference, Mr. Nicol astutely observed that "at one point in the history of psychical research, it was well known and fully recognized that psychic

impressions do not always appear in overt form, but in disguise." He suggested that impressions should be examined for the possible symbolic representation of future events. He added: "As the ancients knew and as modern psychology has clearly shown, our ordinary dreams are often dressed up in symbols. It would be surprising if the only exceptions to those laws were cases of precognition and telepathy." Mr. Nicol concluded that "the fault may lie not with the dreamer but with the investigator."

We may deduce from this that a good deal of precognitive material, because it comes to us in symbolic form—undecoded, as it were—is not recognized for what it is. Symbols, traditionally, require special insight before they yield their meaning. During a recent experience—perhaps it may be classified as induced, or chemically heightened, clairvoyance—with LSD 25 (lysergic acid diethylamide), I encountered some of the apparent implications of such symbols. During it I felt that there was no release in time; that space was its own release; and that it was possible, within space, to look backward and forward, at one and the same time. I saw the duration of my own time, as I did the time of the insect life teaming all around me.

These symbols of creativity are guarded within space, to be revealed to those who search for their meaning. I believe that these images are preserved in nature to communicate their significance to those who seek them. Within the ever-moving timeless structure of each individual are these potentialities, awaiting recognition as our consciousness of past, present and future develops. These symbols, as well as the knowledge they convey, are there to be discovered by man, and all nature in its quest for its own survival.

In spite of the growing body of scientifically compiled and examined material, it is the personal experience of precognition that must remain, for each of us, the most dramatically convinc-

ing. Once experienced, an accurate glimpse into the future is never forgotten—and it may lead to a life-long search toward recapturing, repeating, or comprehending the experience. On the basis of my own glimpses into this area, I have come to develop certain tentative hypotheses. Foremost among these is the following:

I believe that, since it was the minds of men that created an ocean liner which eventually sank, precognition is brought about through an interrelationship between these minds and my own. They may have had, while absorbed in their creation, doubts, fears and mistrust of the very object upon which they worked. The finished product may carry within it the very imperfections that finally cause the accident.

I have no doubt that the thoughts that shaped the machine, released immediately, can be perceived by sensitives whose instincts and intelligence develop within the pulse of nature itself. We may assume this particularly if we accept the premise that thought is energy contained within its own unique frame. The insect, upon being born, instinctively finds its own kind to live out its habitual pattern. To find the way of its kind, and its kind's survival, man has moved through centuries, creating and inventing ways and means to adapt to his new conditions and environment. He has had to do this instinctively and thus has produced intelligence to gain possession of his world.

The material for man's survival is maintained and *willed* within nature, so that there is not as much choice within the inherent consciousness of man as he would like to believe. As we labor through the difficulties imposed upon us by the growing intelligence, we discover that there is a labyrinth from instinct toward and beyond consciousness that leads us to the vast pool in which all memory is contained.

To sum up, the intellectual faculty is the sum-total of knowl-

edge already perceived, while precognition is the ability to perceive the world of thought in action. The Acropolis, as well as the Empire State Building, existed in the thoughts of many men long before the buildings revealed themselves in an ordered world.

Eileen J. Garrett

New York
1961

Foreword

In the first place I should say that this book is not an attempt to prove the existence of precognition, for I am assuming that the evidence is compelling enough to force its acceptance. Indeed, this evidence is extraordinarily strong, as it needs to be, considering the revolutionary nature of the data. One could hardly select a phenomenon less likely to happen; yet apparently it does. Any student of the subject may satisfy himself on this point.

I have included a number of cases, the bulk of which are from my own records. I do not offer these as providing new evidence because, except for a few, they lack certain essentials to bring them up to full evidential status; yet I would not present them if I did not believe them to be genuine precognitions.

These cases have come to me from friends and acquaintances and in correspondence. It has been impressed upon me how widespread experiences of precognition are, and my interviews with the persons concerned have convinced me of their sincerity. They, of course, have nothing to gain by giving me their accounts.

This book reviews all the "explanations" for precognition of which I am aware. I then submit what I believe to be the most

likely direction in which a solution may be found. However, this is not enough. No one can study the cases without asking the following questions: What do the facts of precognition mean? Do they point to any particular view regarding the nature of the universe? How can the Future exist Now? In the light of these facts, how must we regard the law of cause and effect? What significance has precognition for living? Are our lives predestined or free? These and many other questions crowd upon the mind, for it is clear that we are face to face with data of crucial importance. I have tried not to shirk the issues, and have drawn certain conclusions regarding the nature of Reality and what they involve for our personal daily living.

I should add that I approach these subjects as a free lance. I do not belong to any organization which commits me to any given viewpoint.

Arthur W. Osborn

South Yarra
Victoria, Australia
1961

To see without eyes, and hear without ears; this is impossible—but it happens!

1 *The Problem of Paranormal Faculty*

A few years ago I was asked to debate the question: "Can the Future be Foreseen?"

The debate was broadcast, with a lively audience participation. Of course, the "Future" which was the subject of the debate was not the future of scientific prediction, such as plotting an eclipse of the sun or the future position of the heavenly bodies. Nor indeed was the debate about any future which could be inferred in terms of known laws which are supposed to operate uniformly and so provide the bases of scientific predictions. This normal type of forecasting is what is called inferential prediction. The debate was about *non-inferential* knowledge of the future; that is to say, about a future which no amount of knowledge in the present could possibly enable anyone to predict with exactitude. We can understand a physician diagnosing, say, a stomach condition and foreseeing that the patient will almost certainly die in a given period, but no normal inference could be drawn to account for a prediction, which was fulfilled, that a man will be killed in an automobile accident within a few years.

I refer to this debate because the attitude of my opponent—

a university lecturer—well illustrated the cocksureness of those who have not studied the subject and yet reject out-of-hand the possibility of non-inferential knowledge of the future. I think the debate disturbed the complacency of those who took this view.

I will assume that my readers are aware of the fact that a large number of strange occurrences are on record which are usually described as paranormal. A variety of names has been used to describe these phenomena—clairvoyance, telepathy, precognition, and many other terms, all being used to designate various aspects of paranormal phenomena. In recent years the Greek letter *Psi* has come into general use as a neutral term for all those phenomena regarded as being beyond the range of our normal experience. The phenomena are strange indeed and are inexplicable in terms of any theory which postulates our normal sense-consciousness as the utmost limit of our awareness.

We rely on our senses to bring us knowledge of what is occurring in the external world, and the average man finds it incredible that some people can become aware of events under circumstances where normal sensory functioning is impossible. It is not my present purpose to review the evidence for psi phenomena in general. I have in my previous books, *The Expansion of Awareness* (1955) and *The Superphysical* (1937), surveyed these phenomena and endeavored to assess their significance. One curious and unexpected fact which emerges from a study of the evidence is that precognition seems to be better established by factual accounts than almost any of the other types of paranormal occurrences. This is indeed surprising because it is the one which most outrages all our common-sense notions.

Clairvoyance and telepathy, difficult though they may be to fit into our normal frame of understanding, are at least in our present time-field. Clairvoyance is the term popularly used to

describe the ability of knowing by means other than those of the senses what is transpiring at a distance in space, such as the paranormal finding of lost objects or the accurate description of distant scenes and events which could not possibly be known by normal means. It is often difficult to isolate pure clairvoyance from telepathy; that is to say, to distinguish whether the information is paranormally derived from another mind or is a direct cognizance of the event. In my view, clairvoyance and telepathy are not ultimately divisible as separate faculties—except for the purposes of special research.

Our present study is concerned with precognition, but an example of telepathy or clairvoyance may be of interest, especially for the reader unfamiliar with psi phenomena. In any case, the splitting up of psi phenomena into separate compartments is in my opinion a false approach to the study of their nature. The case I now quote is from my records, and is supplied by Mrs. B. N.

Case 1

§ On 1st January, 1946, the Polish ship *Sobieski* left Mombasa carrying troops to England for demobilization. I was aboard, being a member of the British A.T.S., and shared a cabin with eight other girls. On the night of the 2nd of January I had the following experience: I had not been asleep long when I was awakened by the sound of a little boy whistling the tune *Red River Valley*. I wondered how he had got into the cabin and I sat up in my top double bunk and looked down on the floor. I could not see anyone, and the whistling had by then ceased. I thought I had been dreaming, as there couldn't possibly have been a child aboard a troop-ship, and perhaps it had been somebody else outside the cabin. I lay down and was almost asleep when I heard it again. I felt quite certain that it was a young boy whistling. He

whistled so cheerfully and with great gusto. Once again I sat up in my bunk and looked down on the floor but again there was nothing to be seen! I found myself thinking about a little boy in Dublin of whom I had once heard my brother say, "Every time he comes into the shop he is whistling *Red River Valley*." At that time I did not connect the two and convinced myself that the whistling must have been in the next cabin, and went to sleep.

I don't know how long I had been asleep when I gradually became aware of the sound of a woman's sobbing which slowly wakened me up as it became louder. I listened for awhile, thinking it was one of the girls in the cabin, and looked around all the bunks, calling out softly, "Is there anyone awake?" But they were all asleep. The sobbing soon ceased and as I listened to the wind rushing in through the port-holes, I presumed that this must have produced the sound of sobbing. Once again I settled down to sleep—but not for long, as I heard the sobbing coming again and sat up quickly to listen. It was most certainly a woman's voice, crying and sobbing as if her heart would break. The sound grew louder and as I listened I could not recognize the voice, although it was vaguely familiar. The sound seemed to come in from the sea, and became increasingly louder and nearer to me until it seemed to fill the whole cabin. It continued for awhile and then slowly faded out over the sea. No one had heard the sound except myself and I knew that it was not a normal experience. However, I slept more quickly than I had expected, and dreamt the following:

I was in a room in which I could dimly see the forms of two women. They quickly became clearer and I could see that one of them was sitting at a table with her head resting on her folded arms, crying and sobbing; the other woman was standing behind

and bending over her with a hand on her shoulder as if to comfort her. She was wearing a wide-brimmed hat, and as she moved her head, I was alarmed to see that it was my mother. I had not recognized her in the wide-brimmed hat as I had not seen her wearing one like it before. I was anxious to see who the other woman was—I could not recognize her with her head down and it seemed a long time before she raised it—when she did I was equally alarmed to see that it was Cathleen, an old friend of my family. In the dream I understood exactly what the trouble was and as I awoke I was weeping myself and repeating over and over again, "Poor Cathleen! poor Cathleen!" but when I was completely awake I could no longer remember why I was weeping.

I did not write home to tell my family about this experience in case the whole thing had been a nightmare after all. But I knew if there was any truth in it, there would be a letter waiting for me when I reached London. There was—from my mother—telling me how Cathleen's young son (the whistling boy) had, in the middle of the day on 2nd January, fallen under the wheel of a horse-drawn bread van and been crushed to death, and how she (my mother) had gone to Cathleen to try to comfort her. When I eventually reached my home in Dublin, as soon as I conveniently could I searched my mother's wardrobe and found the wide-brimmed hat I had seen in the dream. My mother was, she told me, actually wearing this hat when she called on Cathleen to comfort her. §

This experience illustrates a close telepathic rapport between the dreamer and people and circumstances occurring hundreds of miles away, and under conditions where it was impossible for normal knowledge of the events to have been obtained. There is

also the curious feature of the dreamer being a witness of the distant scene—this type of experience sometimes being described as "traveling clairvoyance."

Many volumes have been filled with accounts of spontaneous telepathy and clairvoyance. As I have pointed out elsewhere, these facts destroy all mechanistic attempts to explain consciousness as being merely a product of neural functioning. If it is assumed that all our knowledge is derived only by means of the senses, then how can we know of events entirely beyond the reach of the senses? It is not difficult in any particular experiment to exclude the operation of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Having done this, we conclude that the mind has no other avenues of knowledge. Nor, we assume, can we know the contents of other minds when all normal means of communication are excluded. But facts so often confound theories. Both spontaneous and experimental cases of paranormal cognition demonstrate that certain people do become aware of thoughts in other minds and of events at a distance under conditions of rigorous control which exclude the possibility of fraud and where it is impossible for any physical means of communication to operate. Does this imply that the mind "spills over" the physical organism? This is a question which we will consider later.

Clairvoyance and telepathy do indeed pose crucial problems for the classical theories of mind; and for those theories which postulate that consciousness is exclusively dependent on the physical organism they administer a *coup de grace*. It is, however, when we come to consider the facts of precognition that we feel out of our depth. Here we have facts which seem inherently impossible. Somehow or other we feel that we might eventually find some theory to account for clairvoyance and telepathy. The information which is conveyed in these cases

does at least exist, and the problem is to account for the paranormal acquisition of this information. Attempts have been made to explain telepathy in terms of "thought waves" on the analogy of radio waves. But these attempts have failed for many reasons, in particular because "thought waves" just do not obey the law of inverse square as do all other known forms of radiation. In any case, this is a line of thinking which in my opinion is doomed to failure from the start as it is mechanistic in approach. Nevertheless, there is a temptation to pursue so-called explanations of this type. But the facts of precognition pull us up with a jolt. We realize at once that here we have a problem of an entirely different nature, and it cannot possibly be solved in terms of any mechanistic conceptions. We are not dealing with the "transmission" of information through space, but through time! The implications of these facts are profound for psychology, philosophy and our views in general regarding the kind of universe in which we are living.

Although it is not my present purpose to review the evidence for precognition—the records of the societies for psychical research provide this in abundance—yet I give in the following chapters a representative selection of cases, mostly from my own records, which illustrates the nature of the problem to be solved.

If a man is warned, shall he escape?
If he is not warned, must he endure?

2 *Precognitive Warnings*

Dreams, presentiments and visions which are warnings against forthcoming events have particular significance in relation to the problem of freedom and determinism, which will be considered in a later chapter.

I now give some cases by way of illustration. Where possible I quote from my own records, but it should be pointed out that the literature of the subject is rich in such cases. And apart from the published accounts, there must be thousands of people who have experienced premonitory warnings in one form or another. My first case is from Mr. R. W. M., who writes:

Case 2

§ Approximately on the first of December, 1923, I dreamt I was in the back seat of a small car. On approaching a crossroad I noticed a big white house on my left, and on my right what appeared to be a hotel, painted yellow with a red sign. *No writing was on this sign.* When this car was crossing the intersection, a big car, which appeared to be American, smashed into our car,

turning it over. The others appeared to be killed; I was not. The dream was fulfilled as follows:

On the Sunday after Christmas I went down to the beach for the day, and the dream turned into fact, even to the sign which was in the process of being painted; the only difference was that I told the driver to *stop* at the corner. At this moment, a big black Buick crossed by at high speed. §

It would appear that the warning was the means of preventing a catastrophe. We can surmise that if it had not been for the warning dream, the cars would have crashed with probable fatal results as foreseen in the dream.

Another precognitive experience of a similar type has been given me by Dr. Raynor C. Johnson, who received it from Mrs. Massingberd Cambell, of London, per Mr. Douglas Fawcett, the philosopher:

CASE 3

§ The following experience occurred in June, 1923. A friend of mine who was a music master at a public school used to drive himself up to London once a week after giving his piano lessons in the morning.

On this particular day he was sitting beside a pupil who was playing from a piece of music by Bach. As my friend was looking rather idly at the music, the printed page seemed to disappear and in its place he saw portions of the road up which he would be motoring in the afternoon to London. At that point the road took a very sharp bend, making a rather dangerous corner. As he was looking at this "picture" he saw a car come around the corner towards him, driven very fast on the *wrong* side of the road.

The whole thing seemed to flash by very quickly and van-

ished. He found himself looking at the piece of music which the boy was continuing to play and he thought that he must momentarily have dozed off and dreamed about the road. He forgot about it.

That same afternoon he was driving up to London, and as he came near to the bend in the road which he had "dreamed" about, he suddenly remembered what he had "seen." He was a very experienced driver and realized that if in fact a car did come towards him on the wrong side he could not hope to escape an accident. Almost automatically, he said, he pulled over to his *wrong* side as he reached this corner, and at that moment the other car came around the bend, driven very fast on the wrong side of the road, exactly as he had "dreamed" it. There was of course no accident, but he owned to having been considerably startled. §

Here, as in the previous case, a future situation was correctly foreseen, but in consequence of the precognitive experience an accident was avoided. It can be argued, of course, that inasmuch as the warning prevents the events foreseen from occurring these are not true precognitions. However, this would not be a correct view of what is experienced. The percipient does precognize a series of events which does manifest, although certain elements in a clearly recognized situation seem to be denied fulfillment because of the warning. Take, for instance, the next case:

Case 4

§ A mother distinctly heard an "inner voice" warn her not to allow her little girl to play on a certain strip of land. The "voice" said: "Send for her at once, or something frightful will happen to her!" The child was recalled, and it was precisely at that spot that a locomotive and tender ran off the tracks, breaking the

walls and crashing against the very rocks on which the child was accustomed to sit. §

Clearly, the mother's deeper consciousness knew of the danger ahead; hence the "voice" which saved the little girl from probable death.

The subliminal consciousness uses many devices to convey its knowledge to the normal waking self. In the above instance it was a "voice"; in others it may be a symbolical dream or even a "hunch." Take, for instance, the following experience of my wife's:

CASE 5

§ I was invited by a friend to go for a car drive. Normally nothing would have pleased me more, but without thinking I said, "I cannot go today." This was untrue. I was amazed at myself. My lips spoke without my consent. However, a most distressing accident occurred. My friend went for her drive with her little grandchild. They stopped to have afternoon tea. While they were returning to the car, another car struck the child and killed her. §

The point of the warning was this: My wife's health at that time was such that if she had witnessed the accident it would certainly have had serious consequences for her. Another precognitive experience of my wife's is as follows:

CASE 6

§ Just before my twenty-first birthday I had a startling dream. I was walking along a country road with my mother, when we became aware that a vehicle, driven at a frantic speed, was approaching from behind. It forced us to separate, my mother

dashing to the right and I to the left. A horse-drawn buggy shot between us and crashed into a tree, killing the driver, who was a relative.

At the breakfast table the following morning I began to tell my mother about the dream; she exclaimed, "Oh! But I had the same dream." However, a curious feature was that in her dream she saw the accident from the right while I saw it from the left. This dream, vivid though it was, turned out to be symbolical of events which happened a few days later. The dream most accurately symbolized a crisis in the lives of the three persons in the dream. The foundation of our finances was suddenly and most unexpectedly swept away. §

Although this dream symbolized events which were in the future from the point of view of my wife and her mother, the third party knew of the impending catastrophe. So this is not strictly speaking a precognitive experience, in view of the fact that the circumstances which caused the crisis were already in existence. Nevertheless, my wife and her mother knew absolutely nothing of the affairs which so soon were to disclose themselves and affect their lives very deeply. Yet their dream consciousness did know, and gave warning. I cite this case here because the symbolical nature of the warning may be relevant when we come to consider the means of communication adopted between our various levels of consciousness.

The next case which I cite is a personal experience of my own; also symbolical in nature:

Case 7

§ I dreamt I was talking to a deceased friend. This friend seemed to be telling me of some unpleasant events which were about to transpire. There was nothing very specific about the

information conveyed. But in the dream the implications of what was about to happen were clear enough. The dream cast a gloom over me and I related it to my wife the next morning. A day or two later letters arrived from England which, to me at least, confirmed the general mood of the dream. §

Here again it would seem that the dream-consciousness was aware of events shortly before my normal consciousness knew about them. It was not in the true sense of the term a precognitive experience. Nevertheless, the evidence indicates that telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition are all kindred aspects of consciousness beyond the level of normal brain-functioning—the brain appearing to be the instrument for canalizing psi faculty.

The following case, involving a clear-cut warning, was written out for me by Mr. W. K., an eminent musician. The experience is that of his wife:

CASE 8

§ Our eldest son, Martin, acquired a small car five years ago, when he was eighteen. Soon afterwards we were spending a holiday at a small cottage thirty miles from our home at Hobart [Tasmania], and Martin had visited us there. Before he left in his car, Ivy [Mrs. W. K.] felt compelled to warn him of an impending accident which she somehow knew was likely to happen on the road from Hobart to Kingston. But as this road is on the opposite side of Hobart to where we were, and as Martin had no occasion to be on that road, he took very little notice of the warning. However, a day or two later his employer asked him if he would deliver some film which was urgently required at Kingston, using his own car. Martin agreed to do this, and set out almost immediately.

About halfway on the journey, Martin suddenly remembered

his mother's warning about this road, and found he was driving at about 40 miles an hour; so he immediately slowed down to 25 miles an hour, but had only just done so when he skidded on a patch of ice—the only patch on the entire journey—and was saved from a very serious accident by having reduced speed. As it was, the car was considerably damaged by hitting a rocky embankment at the side of the road and landing in a ditch. §

The following account of a precognitive dream is a transcription of a tape-recording and is verbatim. It is from Mrs. G. McP.:

CASE 9

§ This happened when I was going to the University at night and working on the trams in the day. I had a dream that I was working on the tram and that a woman with a little boy got off the front of the tram and we ran over them and killed them.

Interviewer: Did the dream come true?

Only in a sort of way; I told my driver next morning about it and he laughed. That was the Friday morning. On the Sunday I was out with a new driver and I was up in the front of the tram talking to him. The passengers were getting off. It was raining, as in the dream, and a woman and a little boy got off from alongside me. I looked back and called to the conductor that no more were getting off and we were just going to move off when all of a sudden I remembered this dream. I turned and leaned right forward to his driving window and looked down towards the bumper bars of the tram and there lying on the road was the little boy with his mother frantically trying to lift him up before we moved on.

Interviewer: When you saw the little boy did the situation look the same as in the dream?

Absolutely the same. The only thing was, there was no time to call stop to the driver and I dragged his hand before he could pull the control around and start the tram. He could see from the expression on my face that there was something dreadfully wrong and he went white as a sheet when he saw the little boy lying on the ground. The child would have been killed if I had not had the dream and remembered it in that split second. §

This is a good example of the subliminal consciousness intervening to prevent an accident. The remembrance of the dream flashed into the waking consciousness just in time to compel quick action and arrest the driver's hand before the control lever could be pulled.

We may know where a man will pass out of sight if we know the road on which he is traveling.

3 *Precognition of Death*

This category probably includes the majority of precognitive cases. Death is a dramatic event, usually associated with emotional disturbance. It is not unlikely that the emotional upheaval is a contributory factor in causing the precognition, or at least in being part of the explanation why precognitions of death are so comparatively frequent.

These precognitive cases can be divided into two classes:

1. Auto-precognition of death from illness or from accident.
2. Precognition of another's death from illness or from accident.

Precognition of the progress of an illness from which one may be suffering, and even of the fact that one will die, does not necessarily imply paranormal knowledge. Also we have to allow for the possibility of suggestion being a contributory cause of the precognition being realized.

Normally one is not aware, in any detailed sense, of bodily processes. Yet below the level of our waking alertness there are vague generalized sensations which make themselves felt as the

buoyancy of good health or, on other occasions, as a disquieting lack of tone and sense of depression.

I have at times carefully noted these bodily sensations, and can often predict the onset of an indisposition. Curiously, an indisposition is frequently preceded by an increase of physical energy which, in my case, seems to be a marshalling of the body's defense mechanisms. All this, however, is within the boundary of normal experience. Nevertheless, in discussing the paranormal prognostication of the course of an illness, we have to take account of our normal awareness of our bodily processes. It is possible that there is a gradual shading off from the normal to the abnormal, say to extreme hypochondria. However, we are confronted with a different order of experience when we study those cases where the dim sensations of bodily processes arising from the viscera and various organs become translated into visual impressions of what is occurring inside the body. Several interesting cases of this sort are given in Dr. Eugene Osty's book, *Supernormal Faculties in Man* (1923). He quotes from Dr. Comar's article "L'auto-representation chez hysteriques" (*Press Medicale,* January 17, 1900) a remarkable case which illustrates the precision with which the brain can be impressed with detailed information concerning bodily functioning quite beyond the medical knowledge of the patient.

I should perhaps note here the manner in which some patients seem to cognize their bodies. In some cases they have the impression of seeing a double of their body before them and in others the impression is of seeing the interior of their bodies. This, I surmise, implies a certain measure of detachment of the consciousness from the body as a whole, and the phenomenon, therefore, will have relevance when we come to consider possible explanations of precognition. I might here mention that on one occasion I saw my own double, and on another occasion my

wife saw it when I was ill with influenza. She was considerably startled and very concerned. The double appeared solid and objectively real, moving about the room with the independence of a living form.

While there may be a certain element of the paranormal in seeing one's own body either externally or internally, we can only feel sure of the paranormality of the event when we consider cases where *precise details* are given concerning death either by illness or by accident. Take, for example, the following case which I summarize from Dr. Gustave Geley's account in *Clairvoyance and Materialization* (1924). Dr. Geley states: "I was personally cognizant, seeing that, as the patient's medical attendant, I was witness of the whole drama from its beginning to its end" (p. 143).

Case 10

§ Mr. Dencausse was aged 76. Six months before his death he was in good health. Yet the following sequence of events occurred:

1. He announced to his near relatives that he would not live to see the winter out, and asserted this daily. He said that he would only agree to see a doctor when his last days were approaching and then only as a matter of form.

2. Eight to ten days before his death he declared he knew the exact date of his death, which would occur on All Saints' Day.

3. On October 28, 1916, four days before he died, he was examined by Dr. Geley, who found him "very thin, but quite alert, leading a fairly normal life, and giving no indication of approaching death . . . There was no organic lesion; the heart action was perfect; there was no fever."

4. The next day, October 29, 1916, the patient said: "I shall die on All Saints' Day, on the stroke of midnight, without suffer-

ing, or death throes. I shall talk up to the last. At midnight I shall seem to fall asleep, but it will not be sleep; it will be the end."

This prediction was exactly fulfilled, at midnight, Tuesday, October 31, 1916, All Saints' Day. §

It should be added that Mr. Dencausse attributed his premonition to a "spiritist revelation." He said that it was his sister, who was deceased, who had warned him several times. Dr. Geley also adds another interesting point. The daughter of Mr. Dencausse, who told Dr. Geley from day to day what was happening, was herself a very remarkable clairvoyant, Mme. Fraya, well-known to all psychical investigators. Dr. Geley suggests that this might indicate that lucidity is in some degree hereditary.

I will next quote another case from my own records which, although it is not an auto-premonition of death, yet seems to indicate that the life-span of an individual is somehow determined. For this I am indebted to Mr. Harold Todd, an Englishman now resident in Australia. He is a man of balanced outlook and in many ways a skeptic. He states:

Case 11

§ In June of 1930 my father had a severe stroke which left him completely helpless. My brother and I found him lying on the lawn after he had been outside to feed his chickens. We got him inside the house and sent for our local doctor. He came and as soon as he saw my father he sent for a specialist. After they had both examined him they came to my mother, my brother and me and told us that it was most unlikely that he could live for more than 24 hours. In fact, the specialist said he had never known anyone to recover from this sort of thing who was as sick as my father was.

It was here that I had the most terrific impression that he would live five years. I told both the doctors and my mother and brother. The doctors were not amused! Anyway, my father died in 1935—almost exactly five years. §

This precognition is really a precognition of an unexpected extension of living. The interesting feature of this case is the "terrific impression" Mr. Todd had to the effect that his father, in spite of his serious condition, would live for another five years. The evidential value of this case would, of course, be increased if we had the corroboration of the other people concerned, but this, unfortunately, is not available. Nevertheless, Mr. Todd is not the imaginative type, and the case is worth citing because it fits into a body of similar testimony which points towards the conclusion that there are factors other than physical which determine the time of death. This conclusion will be reinforced when we consider cases where death from accident is foreseen.

Precognitions of death, as we have already pointed out, probably occur more frequently than any other type of precognitive experience. Camille Flammarion, in his book *Death and its Mystery—At the Moment of Death* (1922), states that he himself knows of more than a hundred cases of personal previsions of death on stated dates (p. 186). Most frequently the precognition of death occurs in a dream, somnolent, or hypnotic state, thus indicating that the origin of the experience lies in those levels of consciousness beyond that of the ordinary waking self. The following remarkable case illustrates this:

Case 12

§ The report is by Mademoiselle Dulay, of the Comédie Francaise. It concerns the tragic end of a young actress, Mademoiselle

Irene Muza. Mlle. Muza was in a hypnotic trance when she was asked if she could see what awaited her personally in the future. She wrote the following:

"My career will be short: I dare not say what my end will be: it will be terrible."

Naturally the experimenters, who were greatly impressed by the prediction, erased what had been written before awakening Mlle. Muza from the trance. She therefore had no conscious knowledge of what she had predicted for herself. But even if she had known, it would not have caused the type of death she suffered.

It was some months later that the prediction "My career will be short" was fulfilled. And indeed, her end was "terrible." Her hairdresser allowed some drops of an antiseptic lotion made of mineral essences to fall on a lighted stove. Mlle. Muza was instantly enveloped in flames, her hair and clothing were set afire and she suffered burns so severe that she died in the hospital a few hours later. §

The details of this case will be found in *Death and its Mystery* (p. 202ff.). Dr. Geley, quoting this same case in his *Clairvoyance and Materialization* (p. 148ff.), gives the exact dates of the séance and of the fulfillment. The séance was held on January 30, 1908, and the accident which caused the death of Mlle. Muza occurred on February 22, 1909.

Cases such as this support the belief that there is a destiny in our lives. How else can we account for the apparent inevitability of this terrible event? The experimenters did not probe for the full details. Could these have been obtained? Or was only a "terrible end" foreseen, which perhaps could have been fulfilled in various ways?

We now turn to our next sub-classification, viz., precognition

of another's death from illness or from accident. The case I now cite is well documented:

CASE 13

§ Mr. Harry Price, the English psychical investigator, was experimenting in Paris with one of Dr. Osty's sensitives, Mlle. Laplace. In one of his tests he selected a letter from a bundle and asked Mlle. Laplace to give him all the information she could about the writer of the letter. She merely held the folded letter in her hands and was, of course, unable to see the contents. The letter was chosen from the bundle at random and was written by Dr. Tillyard, who was at the time touring Canada.

Fifty-three impressions were recorded, and of these forty proved to be correct. But most remarkable of all is the following prediction. The actual record reads:

"The writer will die through a railroad or automobile accident. Wheels or rails are bad for him . . . He has not a long life to live: not very many years . . . He will have a tragic death . . . and will fall on a railway or under a car."

This prediction related to the Australian entomologist, Dr. Tillyard. The prediction was made on July 7, 1928, and Dr. Tillyard was killed in an automobile accident near Canberra, Australia, on January 13, 1937, eight years and seven months after the prediction. §

It so happened that I was in England in 1937 and met Mr. Price, who very kindly showed me his records. The evidential value of this case is excellent; for a full report of the sitting with Mlle. Laplace was published in *Psychic Research*, September, 1928. In 1928, *Psychic Research* was the official journal of the American Society for Psychical Research. Thus we have a printed

record of the exact prediction published more than eight years before the fulfillment of the event foreseen.

Dr. Tillyard, of course, knew of the prediction about his death, but Mr. Price remarked when reporting the case, "These baleful prognostications do not perturb Dr. Tillyard as they are so very infrequently verified; but in July, 1914, Dr. Tillyard was in a railway accident and at least one paper reported him killed." This, however, was written in 1928 and, as we have seen, the prediction was not fulfilled until 1937. In view of the statement, "Wheels or rails are bad for him," it is particularly relevant to note that in 1914 Dr. Tillyard had been in a railway accident. It will be noted that a further detail in the prediction was, "He has not a long life to live." Actually, at the time of the prediction Dr. Tillyard was forty-three years of age.

I do not think that chance coincidence can be invoked to account for a case of this type, especially when it is considered in conjunction with similar cases. In endeavoring to form a judgment regarding it we should, I think, take into account the fact that at this particular sitting there were three experiments during which information was obtained about three different people. During the first experiment the sensitive gave 61 impressions, of which 48 were assessed as being correct. The second experiment produced 26 impressions with 21 being correct with an additional three being ambiguous or dealing with the future. The third experiment, which contained the prediction concerning Dr. Tillyard, comprised, as we have said above, 53 impressions, 40 being correct. Thus, out of a total of 140 impressions, 109 were assessed as correct, which is 77.86 per cent. The odds against chance coincidence must be considerable, but it will be better to delay our discussion of this problem until we present an account of some of the statistical experiments, which enable specific figures to be given for chance coincidence.

The next case is from my own records, and was given to me by Dr. Raynor Johnson, who received it from Miss Dorothy Thibaut in New York:

CASE 14

§ I had a dear friend from whom I had had a letter two days before, on the 24th of September [year not given] in which he said he was feeling quite well again—he had been very ill in the spring and had spent the summer in Nova Scotia—and was looking forward to the winter with us.

On September 26th I dreamed I saw a newspaper with a large headline which said: "Dr. N. died in his sleep." Soon after, I awoke and went to my door for the newspaper, for the dream was one of the kind I had begun to recognize, and I felt disturbed. The headlines showed that another doctor had died suddenly. I knew this man too, and I tried to make myself think this was the answer to my dream. But something inside me told me it was not, and that my friend would not be with us very long. And something seemed to say to me: "Write this down." I looked at the paper the next morning but there was nothing, and again the next.

But during the evening of the 28th my friend, having returned that afternoon, had a stroke, became unconscious immediately, and "died in his sleep." The newspapers on the 29th carried the headline as I had seen it. §

We would naturally like independent corroboration before the occurrence of the fulfilling event. Yet the account bears the impress of an honest report. Also, it is interesting to note the percipient's statement: "The dream was one of the kind I had begun to recognize, and I felt disturbed." It indicates that this lady is sensitive and is learning to discriminate between her

dreams. It will be observed that the dream was not only to the effect that Dr. N. would die; it was also a precognition of the wording of a newspaper headline. This, indeed, is typical of many other similar cases where the percipient is really precognizing his own future perceptions—in this particular instance the perception was of a newspaper headline. There are cases where it is clearly not the actual event which is precognized, but the event as it will be experienced by the percipient.

Another case of precognition of death is from my records and was written out for me by Mr. J. M. B., as follows:

Case 15

§ In 1935, in a small township on the Ouyen-Murrayville line in the Mallee, I was living in the home of a young couple, both friends of many years' standing. Peter and Freda were going to a dance at Murrayville. While Peter was getting his old Rugby car ready I was in the sitting-room of Freda's mother's home, talking to the mother. After a while Freda came in and stood in front of the fire. Five or ten minutes later, looking at Freda's face, a chilliness came over me—something that has happened several times in my life—it was as though I were looking at something beyond this life and I was frightened.

When they had left I went back to Peter's house and spoke to his mother. I told her I thought I saw death in Freda's face. At 2 A.M. I was awakened by a tap on the window. A neighbor whispered to me and asked me to break the news to Peter's mother that on coming back from the dance Freda had collapsed and died. It transpired that the old Rugby car would not start and Freda had helped to push it. Shortly afterwards she had complained of pains in her stomach, and death came before a doctor could help. The coroner's verdict was: "Death through congestion." §

Here it is curious to note that the precognition of death registered itself physically as a sense of "chilliness." The symbolism of communication will interest us when we come to consider the links between our wider consciousness in which psi is operative and our normal awareness.

I now cite from my own records another case of foreknowledge of death from illness. It concerns my mother's death:

CASE 16

§ In 1933 I was engaged in experimenting with a number of sensitives, and it was my custom to take down all statements verbatim. On February 17, 1933, my wife and I were experimenting with two sensitives simultaneously. We were at opposite ends of a very long room, each with a sensitive. The room was long enough for both groups to be out of earshot.

Among other statements of an evidential nature occurred the following prediction: "An elderly lady is ill and will pass on." This was to me. At the same time the other sensitive, with whom my wife was sitting, said: "I am getting a severe chest condition. I feel as if I am choking. It has to do with an elderly lady. She is not here, but across the sea. She will pass on." The sensitive also indicated that the elderly lady was in a hospital.

My mother was in England, and as far as I knew at the time was in good health. Her last letters had been cheerful. Yet three days after the prediction, that is, on February 20, 1933, I received a cable from my brother saying that my mother was in the hospital with bronchitis; the following day came another cable with the news of her death. I might add that my mother had never previously been in a hospital as a patient. §

This is a case of good evidential quality. Firstly, the prediction was written down at the time it was made. Secondly, the

impression as to the nature of my mother's illness was correct. And finally, her death, which was unexpected, fulfilled the prediction in every respect. There is also the interesting fact that the prediction was made by two sensitives simultaneously—or at least within minutes of one another. The sensitives were *complete strangers* to both my wife and myself. This sitting was the first we had with them and they had no normal means of obtaining any information about us, as we met them by chance without any introduction. This, of course, is irrelevant as far as the fulfillment of the prediction is concerned, but it does show that on this particular occasion a high degree of psi faculty was operative.

The following striking case I summarize from Dame Edith Lyttelton's book *Some Cases of Prediction* (1937, pp. 112–115):

CASE 17

§ Mrs. Pritchard was married in 1920 to the Reverend James Pritchard, Congregational minister, at Herne Bay, Kent. In 1922 Mrs. Pritchard had a very vivid dream which she told to many people. She thought her husband died while preaching and that she had made her way through a great crowd of people to find him dying behind velvet curtains. The dream made a deep impression on her; she often felt anxious when her husband was preaching, but could never understand the velvet curtains.

On November 9, 1924, her husband was asked to give the address at the Armistice Service in the Pier Pavilion. There were 2500 persons present and she sat with her stepdaughter at the back of the hall. As she was finding the last hymn someone said, "Your husband has fainted." She looked up and saw her husband being carried from the platform. She made her way through the crowd and when she got on the platform she found her husband lying dead behind green velvet drop curtains. §

This case is fully corroborated by people who were told about the dream before the fulfilling event took place. Dame Edith Lyttelton's book should be consulted for the complete details of this case and also for other equally well-verified cases. The detail of the velvet curtains presents a knotty obstacle in the way of too-glib attempts to explain precognition. Are we to suppose that the Reverend James Pritchard was destined not only to die while preaching, but also to die behind velvet curtains? Such a supposition sounds nonsensical but it is one we must not shirk in our attempts to understand precognition.

The next case of precognition of another's death has been written out for me by my friend Miss D. P., a woman of culture and intelligence and an artist of reputation:

Case 18

§ Sometime in June, 1955, I was walking into the Bank of New South Wales, Collins Street, Melbourne, when, through the glass doors, I saw my brother coming towards me. As usual when we met unexpectedly in town, he raised his hat very ceremoniously and said, "How *do* you *do*?" with exaggerated courtesy (a little joke between us). After a few words we parted, and as he stood at the door looking back at me he smiled at me with great affection. As I smiled in return I was overwhelmed with the conviction that I would never see him again, although at the time he was in perfect health. Through circumstances over which neither of us had any control we did not meet again, although he wrote from time to time.

In December, 1955, he took his wife and family to Portland for a holiday. While there it became necessary for him to have a minor operation, from which he died suddenly of a postoperative thrombosis. On the morning of his death I received an early call from his wife telling me the news, which I already knew as

I walked to the telephone. Two hours afterwards I received a letter from my brother written just before the operation, saying he felt very fit and there was nothing to worry about. Everyone said he had never seemed better than during his last few months, but I knew that his life was drawing to a close, although I fought desperately to control this belief. §

Here we have a precognition of death about six months before it occurred. It will be noted that the premonition was under circumstances where there were no outer indications that death was likely, or even that ill-health was imminent. Knowing Miss D. P., I have not the slightest doubt that she did have this premonition and that she was very much distressed by it; indeed, she "fought desperately to control this belief." Miss D. P. has had other experiences of a psychic nature.

A curious feature of many precognitions of death is not only that the death of a person is foreseen, but also that incidents connected with the death are often seen in vivid detail, as for instance, the Reverend James Pritchard's death behind velvet curtains (Case 17). Another case which illustrates this point is the one to follow. It is related in *Assigned to Adventure* (1938), by Irene Kuhn and is quoted by A. T. Baird in his book *One Hundred Cases for Survival after Death* (1944). The following is an abbreviated account:

Case 19

§ Mrs. Kuhn, an American journalist, had married a fellow American reporter when both were working in China. Mrs. Kuhn returned to America for a holiday, leaving her husband in China. One December afternoon [year not given], while walking on Michigan Boulevard in Chicago, the ordinary physical surround-

ings suddenly vanished and she experienced a "vision." She saw "a strip of green grass within a fence of iron palings. Three young trees, in spring verdure, stood at one side; beyond the trees and the fence, in the far distance, factory smokestacks trailed sooty plumes across the sky." She saw a small group of men and women dressed in black clothes; a limousine drew up on a gravelled road by the grass. Two men alighted and offered their hands to a woman in black. The woman was herself. She was gently urged by the men towards the group and she then saw a small hole in the grass into which someone was placing a small box. She then recognized the group of people as members of her husband's family. Only the family were there—her husband was missing. Then she knew what was in the box and she "crumpled on the grass without a sound."

This precognitive vision, which occurred in December, was fulfilled precisely about five months later, in the early spring. Her husband died in China and his ashes were sent home to Chicago. The procedure of placing the small box containing the ashes occurred exactly as foreseen. The three young trees, the spring grass, the fence of iron palings and the view of the city's smokestacks were all exactly as seen in the vision. §

The final case to be given in this chapter is another example where not only is death foreseen, but also the nature of the death. It is from Miss Lilian Cullup, England:

Case 20

§ In July, 1929, I was finishing my course at a training college for teachers. One night I had a most distressing dream. I dreamt that my youngest brother Hywell, not yet seventeen, was dead. The dream was so distressing that I woke up sobbing, in the

dormitory. I remember it vividly. The girls all tried to comfort me and allay my fears and stop my crying so that I could go down to breakfast as usual. I wrote to my mother about it.

I went home for the holidays and then discovered that my sister, *on the same night that I had had my dream,* had also dreamt about Hywell. In her dream my sister saw my brother drowning and a boy was trying to save him. The rescuer went under the water three times. But in the dream my brother was drowned in spite of the rescue efforts. My sister also wrote to my mother about it.

Three weeks after our dreams, my brother went to his Grammar School on a Saturday morning. The parting words of my mother to him were, "Be careful! You know what the girls dreamt." He laughed.

On the afternoon of July 24th my family, including my sister and myself, were at the Village Vicarage, Abbotsley, Huntingdon, at a garden party. A telegram came for "Cullup" reading: "Your son has had an accident come at once." The Vicar took us by car to Huntingdon Grammar School where we learned that Hywell had been drowned. His body had not yet been found. We also learned that his friend Archie Whitehead had gone under the water three times in an effort to save my brother.

I wrote to Sir Oliver Lodge about it at the time. He wanted the incident to be recorded in the records of the Society for Psychical Research, but my sister would not agree to this as she felt sensitive about the publicity.

The experience of this dream was *vivid* and I remember its impact now. I am convinced that we had seen into the future and either that we were meant to warn my brother—which my mother did—and try to save him, or that drowning was his destiny. §

It is a pity that these dreams were not recorded in the S.P.R. records. This case would then have been of first-grade evidential quality as several people were told of the dreams prior to their fulfillment. The incident of the rescuer going under the water "three times" is the type of detail which confers authenticity on a dream as being a true precognition and not merely an expression of a general foreboding of death. I might add here that Miss Cullup wrote to me about this experience after reading one of my earlier books and before she knew that I was writing a book specifically on precognition. I see no motive for her sending me this case other than the fact that the experience has made a deep impression upon her. Her account "rings true."

Triviality is not in the event
but in the mind.

4 *Precognitive Knowledge of Trivial Events*

The classification of cases according to the subjects precognized is purely for purposes of convenience in presentation. Certain incidents which on the surface seem to be trivial may not be so for the individuals concerned. Yet there are cases where there seems to be no alternative except to regard the events foreseen as being trivial, for they make very slight impact on the percipients, who are at a loss to understand why matters of so little significance to themselves should have been precognized. Nevertheless, these cases are important for the theoretical understanding of the problem.

Prediction of Horse Race Winners

I classify cases where the winner of a horse race is foreseen as being of the trivial type. Of course, if the winning horse happens to be carrying our money we might revise our views as to the "triviality" of the event! But consider those cases where the percipient is not interested in racing and therefore to whom the outcome of the race means nothing at all. The following case is

of this type. It is from my own records and was given to me by Mr. P. J. R., of Melbourne, Australia, a businessman with a keen mind and balanced outlook:

CASE 21

§ On the Monday morning preceding the Melbourne Cup of 1937, I awakened with an imperative urge to look up in the dictionary the meaning of two words; I was hazy and sleepy, unable to recall the source or nature of the prompting, but with a remarkably distinct impression of urgency that it must be done, which I obeyed by going immediately about it. Before I was able to get my wits in order one word had faded out, but the other remained with me: the word was "galloway," which turned out to mean a "small horse."

The Melbourne *Herald* of the following day—Melbourne Cup Day—carried on its front page in unusually large type: A GALLOWAY WINS THE MELBOURNE CUP. §

In answer to questioning, Mr. P. J. R. stated that he was not interested in racing, although he did mention his dream to several men who *were* interested. He had never previously dreamed of horseracing, nor had he ever had a precognitive dream of any sort. This dream remains a unique experience in his life.

A case similar to the above is the following, received from Mrs. Constance Moore, of Melbourne, Australia:

CASE 22

§ Sometime during 1948 (approximately October) I had a strange dream, which repeated itself several times during the

night. I heard a voice say: "Gallant Gentleman will win you a lot of money." Next day I told a friend, Mrs. Vick of Ascot Vale, Melbourne, about it. She laughed and said, "Gallant Gentleman is a race horse and is running on Saturday," which was a few days off. Out of curiosity I asked her to back it for me as I had very little knowledge of racing or betting. Well, it won, and if I remember rightly, at ten to one. It won many times after that, and if I had backed it each time, I would have made a lot of money. The same year I dreamt of Bronze Laddie, which won at twenty-eight to one, and of many others.

These dream tips are spasmodic and sometimes weeks in advance. One was given in symbols for the Melbourne Cup, 1958. On the morning of Cup Day I jokingly remarked to my husband that someone has slipped. I haven't dreamt of the winner of the Cup. He then got up to make tea, and when he brought me a cup I had dozed off. On his waking me I said to him, Baystone is going to win the Cup, for while I was dozing I dreamt that a pair of hands held some stones (which I had actually gathered in a small bay near Mornington) and a voice said, "These stones from the Bay are a symbol," to which I replied, "Oh, you mean Baystone." It won. I had a modest bet and purchased a very smart hat with the winnings, and also someone less fortunate was a little better off because of my win. It is a golden rule with me to give away part of any gain I may obtain. These events I swear are all true. §

The transparent honesty of this account can hardly fail to impress the reader. But a good deal of statistical work would have to be done before these and other dreams predicting winning horses could be submitted as conclusive evidence for precogni-

tion. We would need to know, for example, the total number of all Mrs. Moore's dreams about race horses. She states, in reply to questioning, that if she does dream about a certain horse winning, it always does.

Mary Monteith in her *A Book of True Dreams* (1929) relates several cases of the prediction of winning horses. One case of more than usual interest is summarized here:

CASE 23

§ In the dream, which occurred two nights before the Derby of 1926, the winning horse was seen as Coronach, ridden by Steve Donoghue. In actual fact, although the winning horse was Coronach, it was not ridden by Steve Donoghue, but by a jockey named Childs. However, the following curious fact is to be noted. There was a strong rumor on the racecourse that Steve Donoghue *was* to ride Coronach; indeed, bets were placed on the strength of this belief. §

This dream was told to a number of people before its fulfillment. This case is another illustration of the fact that precognition is often of an event as it will be experienced by the percipient and not necessarily as it actually occurs.

When one considers all the factors involved in the winning of a horse race and the difficulty experienced punters have in picking the winners, it does present us with an enormous problem to realize that the result of a race can apparently occasionally be dreamed before the race has started. However, this is only one class of precognition and it presents us with no feature more difficult to explain than do other instances of the paranormal foreknowledge of trivial events. We will proceed, therefore, to give some further examples of foreknowledge of events of little interest or significance to the percipient.

The following is from a friend of mine, Miss Joan Joske, of Melbourne, Australia:

CASE 24

§ *March 21, 1954.* 5 A.M. Sunday morning. Written down on awakening. I felt I had to get a pencil and paper ready for something. I did not know what. The following picture came into my mind and I wrote it down in the dark: "China basin broken into little bits like a smashed eggshell. Someone has just dropped it and is watching—a fat woman."

Sunday morning—same day. I showed this writing to Matron Cox, who had stayed the night. I had no idea what it meant.

Later—same day. We decided to go to Sassafras for lunch. During lunch a door slammed and a china basin fell from a shelf around the room; it broke into tiny pieces. A young boy came and picked up the bits. I thought the woman part of my impression was not correct; however, just then the owner of the cafe came in, and she was just the shape I had seen. I had never been in this cafe before. In fact, it had just been taken over by new people. §

It is difficult to see any meaning for this trifling glimpse into the future, which is confirmed by Matron Cox. Chance coincidence is an improbable explanation because the combined details of the broken basin and the fat woman are unusual items of evidential importance. And we should note the psychological impulse which preceded the experience: "I felt I had to get a pencil and paper ready for something." In my view this indicates that the experience emanated from a part of the consciousness which can be in touch with the so-called future.

Another case in my records is of an even more trivial nature than that of the broken basin. My wife had the following dream:

CASE 25

§ *15th December, 1952.* I had a curious fragment of a dream, in which I was in a cafe. I seemed to have left the main dining room when a waiter came out. He stood behind my left shoulder and said he was sure I had not had a sufficiently good meal, and asked me to go back, when he would get me something more. I declined. As I spoke to him I particularly noticed his face and thought he did not look like a waiter at all. His face suddenly became very clear to me and I thought I would remember it if I ever saw him again. That was all there was to the dream.

On the following day I went with my husband and a visitor from England to lunch at the Res Astoria. While we were waiting people were coming in and taking their places. Among these there was a group of six or eight people who passed us to take their seats at the table immediately behind us. One of these was the man whose face I had seen so clearly in my dream. He sat behind my left shoulder, and the waiter, also of course behind my left shoulder, was assiduously attending to my wants. The man was a complete stranger to me and I felt no personal interest in him whatever beyond the fact that his face was undoubtedly the one I had seen so very vividly in my dream. §

What one feels about a dream of this sort is that it was probably a part of a more detailed dream, of which only a fragment was remembered. Slight though the remembered portion was, it does seem to include a precognitive element. The face in the dream was exceptionally vivid, and there is the evidential point that the face was recognized although it was not that of the waiter, as in the dream. Did the fact that the man recognized was behind my wife's left shoulder, as also was the waiter, cause the confusion?

The dream does not merit closer analysis, but those who are familiar with J. W. Dunne's *An Experiment with Time* (1927) will remember his thesis that normal dreams contain precognitive elements which by training we can learn to recognize.

The following two dreams, although relating to comparatively unimportant events, are of good evidential value. The accounts are from my records and were written out for me by Mrs. B. N., now in Australia:

Case 26

§ One night in the early part of 1951, when we lived in Ireland, I dreamt I saw a most peculiar-looking old man. His face was wrinkled and his neck was a mass of flabby rings of flesh. He was completely bald and wore a very shabby raincoat. He held a long-handled scythe with a large, curved, sharp blade. He was just like "Old Father Time," but had no beard. The picture was just a fleeting one, though very clear, and gave me such a shock that I woke immediately. Next morning at breakfast I told my husband about the dream, saying that I would recognize the man if I ever saw him again.

That afternoon a knock came to our front door and through the ribbed glass I could see the silhouette of a man with a long-handled scythe in his hand. My first instinct was not to open the door, but out of sheer curiosity I did so, and there he was, just as I had seen him in my dream, with the same wrinkled face and neck, the shabby overcoat and the sharp, curved blade of the scythe. Although in the dream he was completely bald, now he was wearing a bowler hat and I could not see whether he was bald or not. I felt very afraid and must have shown it, for he said, "Don't be frightened. I just want to know if I can cut the grass in your back garden." (As it was a new house and we had

just moved in, the grass was almost three feet high.) Not knowing whether to say yes or no, I said I would ask my husband about it and if he would call the next day I would give him an answer. I discussed it with my husband and we decided not to have him. He returned the next day and when I told him our decision, he said, "I wish you the best of luck." I never saw him again. §

Mr. Peter B. N. adds his corroboration as follows:

§ I can state that the above is true. My wife did tell me about the dream before the above occurred. Shortly afterwards our next-door neighbor said that he had seen the old man before and was able to confirm that he hadn't a hair on his head. §

Trivial though this dream is, it is well-documented and therefore worthy of being recorded as one more example of a large category of such dreams.

The next case is another experience written out for me by Mrs. B. N. Here the precognition did not come in the form of a dream, but rather as a vision during a period of relaxation:

CASE 27

§ One afternoon while I was lying down relaxing, a picture flashed into my mind of our cocker spaniel pup. He was limping badly, the *left hind leg* being carried. I mentioned it to my husband at tea later that afternoon. Three weeks later, our pup was knocked down by a small truck and broke his *left hind leg.* For several weeks he couldn't walk at all, but eventually was able to limp around, carrying the injured leg behind him. §

Mr. B. N. writes:

§ I can confirm that the above is true. §

The detail of the injured *left hind leg* adds to the value of this case. Without this detail, the obvious explanation which suggests itself is that the vision was just an expression of the normal apprehension many people feel for the safety of their pets in these days of crowded roads. Yet, although anxiety for one's pets may be widespread, how many people have detailed visions of a specific injury?

Another waking vision comes from my old friend, Miss Ellen Jowett, living in North Wales. She writes:

CASE 28

§ Yesterday, while in bed, I clearly saw your letter lying on the floor of the porch—but when I went down to pick it up, it was not there, only one or two other non-expected letters. So I went back to bed saying, "There, you see, Ellen, your vision was quite wrong." Then this morning there was your letter lying on the floor just as I had seen it yesterday. §

I asked Miss Jowett the following questions: "You say that you clearly saw my letter lying on the porch. Is this the usual place where your letters are left by the postman? Was my letter as seen in your vision in an unusual position?" Miss Jowett replied:

§ The letter lying on the floor of the porch was *not* in the usual place and that was the one thing that rather impressed me. §

Here it is the detail of the position of the letter which makes the vision significant. But I am biased in favor of accepting Miss

Jowett's statement because I know how balanced and truthful she is. She would not have written about this trifling experience unless she had felt that it possessed an unusual feature.

The next two cases (both experiences of Mrs. B. N.) I shall present seem to have only slight precognitive elements, but they are interesting because they exhibit telepathy and illustrate the point that the psi faculty cannot be arbitrarily divided. Most investigators have noted that those people who have pronounced precognitive ability also usually have telepathic experiences. This is the case with Mrs. B. N., as the following experiences will show:

Case 29

§ When I was working in the children's wards at a Melbourne hospital there was a little five-year-old girl, Susan, who was suffering from a brain tumor and had only a short time to live. I took a special interest in this child and became very fond of her as she was the same age as my own daughter. I had also gotten to know her mother quite well and admired her strength and courage.

One night when I was about to go to sleep I decided to pray for this child, although at the time I had not prayed for years; and so, as in my younger days, I relaxed my mind and tried to reach as deep a level of consciousness as I possibly could before I commenced to pray mentally that little Susan would not die but would somehow become better and eventually be cured. I was halfway through my prayer when I became aware of other sentences in my mind, which seemed to be suggesting that Susan would die. Thinking that my mind was tired and that my thoughts were becoming confused, I continued with what I wanted to pray. Suddenly I became acutely aware of the sentence, "Sweet Jesus, give her peace." I woke up with a shock; this

was certainly not my prayer, as I had never prayed in that way, and it struck me that this was the prayer of a Roman Catholic.

The next morning in the ward, I referred to Susan's case-history sheet and saw that she was a Roman Catholic; and although I was in conversation with her mother that day, I naturally did not like to mention my experience and so I have never been able to ascertain to whom the other prayer belonged.

. One night, soon after the above experience, I dreamt that I was carbolizing Susan's empty bed. (This is a procedure that is carried out only after the discharge or death of a patient.) On thinking about the dream after I awoke, I thought it was unlikely that I would be asked to do this as it was a duty which was usually performed by a nurse's aid or assistant. I was on my day off at the time and when I came on duty again, I learned that Susan had died, and out of a nursing staff of eleven, I was detailed to carbolize her bed. §

The precognitive item in this dream is, of course, the carbolizing of the bed. Apparently it would not normally have been Mrs. B. N.'s task to do this, yet it was not an entirely improbable event in the course of her normal duties. Taken, however, in conjunction with the other items in the dream which indicate a telepathic rapport with other people connected with Susan, the carbolizing incident assumes some precognitive significance.

What strikes one in connection with Mrs. B. N.'s dreams is their general content of veridical items. In popular parlance, she tends to "dream true." Take, for instance, the following dream:

CASE 30

§ One night in the early part of 1955 [in Melbourne] I had not been long asleep when I dreamt that I was standing on a hill

looking down on a house that was burning. It was a dark night and I could see the large square-shaped roof silhouetted against the red glow of the fire. The house was detached, although there were houses on either side of it. I woke up, but was soon asleep again and this time I seemed to be in the house because the flames leapt right up before my eyes. Then I heard a loud crash and a woman screamed. I woke up again and for a second I could still hear the woman screaming. I woke my husband and told him about it. I was trembling and felt nauseated, and didn't want to go to sleep again. After a short while I must have dozed because I saw a man, wheeling a bicycle, approach a small group of people. He had large, terrified eyes that were filled with tears and he was trembling all over. His voice trembled too and he could hardly speak. He was telling them his sad story. I thought he had an Irish accent. In the dream I had understood what he had said, but when I woke I could not remember it.

The next morning I searched the newspapers but could not find anything about the fire; the following morning, however, I saw the photograph in the *Argus* and recognized the man immediately. I do not know this man and do not understand why I should have seen his house burning. §

The above account was accompanied by a photograph from the Melbourne *Argus*. The photograph is a very graphic one, the caption reading: "His eyes saw horror. Five of his children killed before his eyes in their blazing home. This man struggles to make a last desperate rescue bid." A further paragraph reads: "This struggling man watched five of his children burn to death. He is Reginald de Barris, of Franklin, Massachusetts. He rescued his wife and their youngest child, Diane, from their blazing home and had to be restrained from making a last desperate bid to save his son and four other daughters, all under seven."

The correspondence between the details of the dream and those of the newspaper photograph is striking. The man's eyes are large and terrified; in fact, they are wildly staring. It will be recalled that in the dream Mrs. B. N. thought the man had an Irish accent. This we cannot check, but it is interesting to see that the photograph shows a Catholic priest as one of the people attending to the man.

While I regard this dream as being of the telepathic class, yet some might consider it a precognition of seeing the newspaper photograph. The question we naturally ask is: Why should Mrs. B. N. have had such a dream at all? She had not the slightest interest in or connection with the people concerned in the tragedy, so outwardly there are no linkages to account for this experience. But are there some sympathetic chains of association at a deeper level of consciousness which may have caused the dream? Always we are driven to look beyond the threshold of our normal sensory awareness for a possible understanding of these unusual experiences.

I have received the following case from Mrs. I. J. R. It is one of the many experiences of her aunt:

Case 31

§ Shortly after I was married I paid a visit to my parents in the country. While there one day I drove into the local town with my father in his buggy. Now, as I was driving along going *into* town I suddenly saw an accident happening to my father and me. I saw the horse's tail become entangled in the harness; the horse began to kick and eventually got its leg over the shaft. I climbed down and went to the horse's head to quiet it. Men (two) from a neighboring field came running to help. They got the horse's leg free and helped bind the broken shaft with wire. That was all I saw.

What I saw actually happened to us *coming home* from town. We had only gone a few miles when it happened and exactly as I had seen it. The temporarily mended shaft enabled us to return to town and have it replaced. §

The following two cases are from Mr. W. K. and relate to experiences of his wife. Mrs. W. K. is very sensitive and is constantly aware of what are usually called "psychic" impressions. In the next chapter I include some more of her experiences. The following is a simple case, but convincing in spite of its triviality:

CASE 32

§ When planning a further visit to Sydney for October of last year (1957) Ivy [Mrs. W. K.] received an impression that we were driving in a black car, late at night, across Sydney Harbor Bridge, with bright lights everywhere, but very little traffic, and that she was wearing a fur wrap. Towards the end of our stay in Sydney some friends living on the northern shore invited us to supper at their home, where we met two other friends of theirs, who were also invited. We arrived by ferry boat—the easiest way—and arranged to catch the last boat back to the City at 11:30 P.M. Our friends escorted us down to the ferry wharf, only a few yards from their home, where we awaited the boat. For some reason the boat, coming from a further point, failed to call in at our wharf, thus leaving us stranded. Our host was mystified, and embarrassed at having been so certain that the ferry would call there. However, as the other two visitors had come in their own car and were ready to depart, they kindly offered to take us to our hotel in the City, although this was away from their own home direction.

As we were crossing the bridge, I reminded Ivy about her prevision of this situation, which had not occurred to her until that moment. We were driving over Sydney Harbor Bridge late at night with very little traffic about, the bright lights of Luna Park and the City all around, and Ivy was wearing a fur wrap. The car was a shiny black Citroen. §

The evidential items in this case are: (1) Driving in a black car across Sydney Harbor Bridge. (2) Late at night. (3) Bright lights everywhere. (4) Very little traffic. (5) Mrs. W. K. wearing a fur wrap.

These events could not have been normally anticipated at the time of the precognition, nor indeed even immediately before they actually occurred. The total situation would not have eventuated at all except for the unforeseeable mistake on the part of Mr. and Mrs. W. K.'s host.

The next case is also of a trivial nature and perhaps could be considered as an instance of telepathy. However, Mrs. W. K.'s psychic impression took place about three minutes prior to the occurrence of the fulfilling event:

Case 33

§ A year or two ago Ivy was sweeping the stairs at home one morning when she had the unmistakable impression that a packet of "Surf" washing powder had appeared on the next stair as she was about to sweep it. Rather nonplussed, she finished sweeping the stairs and was just about to go on to the next household job when the front doorbell rang—this was about three minutes after the psychic impression. Ivy answered the door, to find a genial saleslady who said, "Will you please accept this

sample packet of washing powder with the compliments of the 'Surf' company. We feel sure you will go on using it once you have tried it." §

Trivial though this case is, it is interesting when taken in conjunction with Mrs. W. K.'s other experiences and indicates the generalized nature of her sensitivity.

I will conclude this chapter with very brief summaries of three well-known cases where trivial incidents have been foreseen. These cases are well-documented, and have been quoted and discussed so often that I need do little more than refer to them. Those interested will, of course, want to consult the original accounts, which appeared in the *Proceedings* of the (English) Society for Psychical Research:

Case 34

§ Mrs. C. dreamed she was being followed by a monkey. The monkey followed her persistently, which terrified her as she had an intense horror of monkeys. She told the dream to her husband and family at breakfast. Contrary to her usual custom, she went for a walk, during which she saw, and was followed by, "the very monkey of her dream." Most unusual to be followed by a monkey through the streets of London! (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. XI, 1895, pp. 488–489.)

Case 35

Mrs. Mackenzie dreamed that she was in her drawing-room with several people, including a Mr. J. She left the room to see whether supper was ready; on returning to the drawing-room she found the carpet, a new one, covered with black spots. She knew that the carpet had been burnt and counted five patches. She told the dream at breakfast. It being Sunday, the party went

to church. Afterwards Mr. J. joined them for lunch, a thing he had never done before. Mrs. Mackenzie went into the dining room to see if lunch was ready. On returning to the drawing-room she saw that her carpet was burnt. The servant had carried live coals from one fire to another and in doing so had spilled some on the carpet. And here is the puzzling detail, five holes were burnt! (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. V, 1888, pp. 343–344.)

CASE 36

The wife of the Bishop of Hereford dreamed that her husband was away from home and that she read prayers in his absence. After doing so she entered the dining room and there saw, to her horror, an enormous pig standing between the dining table and the sideboard. The dream was fulfilled in detail, for after prayers a pig which had escaped from its sty was found standing in the dining room in the exact spot where it had been seen in the dream. (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. XI, 1895, pp. 487–488.) §

J. W. Dunne's book, *An Experiment with Time* (1927), should also be consulted for several accounts of trivial incidents foreseen in dreams and in waking impressions. Dunne has a theory to account for these precognitive impressions. We will consider this theory in a later chapter.

No one steps upon the Stage of Life without his part to play, and the prompter from the wings reads the lines to come.

5 *Precognition of Significant Events in a Person's Life*

Dr. Eugene Osty, a French physician and former Director of the Institut Metapsychique International in Paris, in his book *Supernormal Faculties in Man* (1923) states: "Every human being knows his own entire life according to laws that are still to be discovered, and metagnomic [sensitive or mediumistic] subjects are psychic instruments of variable quality that reveal what each human being knows concerning himself without being aware consciously, or even subconsciously, that he has this knowledge" (p. 185).

This is a bold generalization, but it is based on many years of intensive research and no reader interested in the subject should fail to read Osty's book. This is one of those general theories which can never be completely supported by adequate detailed evidence. Nevertheless, I feel that it is an intuitive flash which can help to lead us to an understanding of the problem of precognition.

It is necessary now that we should have before us a few cases where significant events in a person's life have been foreseen. Of course the term "significant" is a relative one and must be judged

according to the individual circumstances involved. It might also be conceded that in a modern urban community the normal incidents of the average person's life lack dramatic emphasis and indeed conform to a fairly predictable pattern. If we know the social background of a person, his occupation, mental outlook, dominant motives, relationships, friends and habits of living, we have a reasonable body of data to enable us to foresee the general trend of such a person's life. A sensitive, therefore, cognizing such a life in an attempt to foretell the future might be unable to see anything except the pattern applicable to most people living in the same environment and of similar psychological type.

The precognized events therefore which are evidential would need to be of an unexpected nature; or if not unexpected in a general sense, they would at least have to possess detailed features clearly identifiable as being significant and unforeseeable by any normal means. The high points in most people's lives are journeys, change of residence, meeting with people who alter their lives in some way, unexpected fortune or misfortune, marriage, the birth of children, divorce, illness and, of course, most significant of all, death. Ordinary people, therefore, present a fairly flat landscape for cognizing and the sensitive often has little of evidential value to communicate. Yet no matter how prosaic our lives may be there are detailed episodes which could by no stretch of imagination have been foreseen as probable happenings.

Those who feel they are good at guessing a person's future or even character should experiment with strangers to whom they are casually introduced. Then compare these guesses with the records of the predictions of genuine sensitives who are similarly presented with strangers for cognizing—as, for instance, the successes of Mlle. Laplace in psychometrizing a letter of Dr.

Tillyard (p. 43). Such an experiment will quickly reveal to us how far off the mark we can be when merely guessing.

One other comment should be made as a prelude to a consideration of the cases under this heading. When cognizing the general pattern of a life it is often only after the events have occurred that we realize the full meaning of an episode, and of course we are the only ones who can assess the significance of an event in our own lives.

I now give from my own experience an instance of what I describe as being a precognition of the general trend of a life:

CASE 37

§ In 1919, after I left the Army, I trained for a position which was offered me in South America. For this purpose I took lessons in Spanish. I mention this to show that my waking consciousness was filled with plans for the expected journey to South America. It was at this time that I told a friend of mine of my proposed plans for the trip. This friend, who occasionally had intuitional and psychic experiences, instantly replied, "You are not going to South America, but I do see a large 'A' over your head." This naturally surprised me in view of the plans which were maturing for my South American position. However, unexpected changes occurred in the Australian organization of the firm which employed me. At short notice I was asked to go to Australia. I accepted, but reluctantly, as I was more attracted to South America. So my friend's intuitive "flash" was fulfilled—the big "A" over my head represented Australia. This precognition, however, is slight and would be hardly worth recounting if it stood alone. §

It so happened that in the latter part of 1920 I had a sitting with a psychic, a complete stranger to me. She predicted my

journey overseas, but by then I knew that I was going to Australia, so she could have picked up this information from my mind. However, she continued with some further details, including a description of a woman whom she said I would meet. The physical description was too general to be evidential. There was, however, a psychological aspect which was unusual. It concerned the nature of the relationship with this woman. When the prediction was made this had little meaning for me, although I can say that the reference had to do with one particular aspect of my life. I venture to say that no one unendowed with psychic gifts could possibly have guessed what it was. The full evidential value of this precognition, unfortunately, cannot be appreciated without the disclosure of a considerable amount of biographical detail, and this I do not feel disposed to give.

The psychic added certain other predictions concerning my future and in particular saw me traveling over the seas many times. She saw me going backwards and forwards, and kept repeating "backwards and forwards." The prediction has certainly proved to be true. My position has required frequent trips between Australia and England, and prior to that I was in what were then known as the Dutch East Indies. Altogether, I have been very much a bird of passage until recent years. Thus this psychic, whom I so casually contacted in 1920, certainly foresaw my many journeyings. The prediction about the meeting with the woman in Australia was also fulfilled, and under somewhat unusual circumstances. She eventually became my wife. I will let her tell her own story, as it dovetails very neatly into the prediction. She writes:

Case 38

§ I had written a paper on Robert Browning, but as I was recovering from an illness I arranged for someone else to read it.

The paper was read in a moderately large hall to an audience of about 300 persons. I sat at the back of the hall.

After the lecture questions were requested, and several people asked them. But there was one man sitting near the front who asked a rather critical question and tended to challenge my authority for a certain statement I had made. I could see only the man's back, but I felt a sense of personal significance as between him and myself, though he was a complete stranger to me. It was of a joyous nature in spite of the extreme embarrassment his question was causing me. I have always regarded the experience as one of recognition. I just *knew* him. It would not have mattered who or what he was—the relationship was there. I learned later that this man had only that day arrived from England on his first visit to Australia.

This experience seems to be linked with another which occurred when I was in my teens. I occasionally had experiences which I now recognize to have been of a psychic nature. The incident to which I now refer was as follows:

CASE 39

I was playing a game at a birthday party with a number of young people, when suddenly I seemed to be told (clairaudiently) that no one in my then circle of friends was of any special significance for me. I was told that I would have to wait a long, *very long time,* before I met the man with whom my life would be joined, and that it would be well worth my while to wait for him. §

Eventually we married, but circumstances prevented this for many years. How curious, therefore, that my wife in her teens should have been "told" that she would have to wait "a long, *very long* time" before she met her man! The account of this ex-

perience would be incomplete unless I testified to the sweetness and completeness of our relationship. The sense of a "destined" meeting seems still to be with us.

I could relate other experiences which point to the conclusion that outer relationships are often only the manifestation of deeper linkages below the surface of our waking consciousness. I do not press this theory at this stage. What should here be noted is the curious sequence of precognitive events, which may be set out as follows:

(1) My friend who saw the big "A" together with the knowledge that I would not go to South America.

(2) The stranger-psychic who saw me traveling backwards and forwards and meeting a special woman who would satisfy certain psychological needs. (If the prediction had been that I would merely meet a woman, it would have been on a par with the usual rubbish which is purveyed by psychics of uneven quality. It is the psychological detail which for me makes the prediction evidential.)

(3) Then comes my wife's girlhood precognitive experience.

(4) And finally, her immediate recognition of me in the lecture hall.

When the general pattern of a life is cognized it necessarily involves a period of years for the predicted events to disclose themselves. Consequently such cases are not the best material for establishing the reality of precognition. Cases where the precognized situations eventuate in a few days or weeks are more useful in this connection. To use an analogy, the laws of heredity are better established by experiments on rapid-breeding mice than on elephants!

The following case was given me by Miss D. P., who says:

CASE 40

§ In February, 1914, when I lived in Bendigo, I had a very vivid dream in which I saw my brother, who was an engineer in Malaya, dressed in tropical uniform of military type. He was rushing into native huts, coming out with rifles and throwing them into heaps which were then set alight. I had no knowledge of the likelihood of his being in uniform.

I wrote to him describing this dream. It was some time before I received a letter from him owing to the fact that he was in the heart of the jungle near Muah and the letter was held up for some months. He only got it, I imagine, when he went to Singapore about the time war broke out. The events of my dream, which I had had some months before, then occurred. Owing to German instigation, aided by an Indian Regiment, guns and ammunition had been distributed to the natives with instructions to kill as many white people as possible. My brother was engaged in collecting these arms and destroying them. He wrote that my dream was true in every respect. §

In reply to questioning, Miss D. P. replied as follows:

§ Dreams of this type have a compelling quality with a feeling that they are real, and are not just like ordinary dreams. They haunt one for days. §

It will be noted that if it had not been for the War, Miss D. P.'s brother would not have been in uniform. Here, therefore, we have the War cognized, not directly but by implication. This tends to support Osty's statement that sensitives are delineators

of individual lives and not of the future in the abstract. Public events such as wars, earthquakes, etc., when they are precognized, are seen through the eyes, as it were, of the individuals participating in such events. We would, indeed, expect this to be the case. The future necessarily has meaning only in relation to human beings.

Sometimes precognition of significant events is accompanied by the foreseeing of details of no apparent importance. A good example of this is reported by Mrs. Laurence Bendit (Phoebe Payne) in her book *This World and That* (pp. 159–160):

CASE 41

§ This prediction was made to Mrs. Bendit some years before she was married, by a gypsy—a source we would not usually rely upon. In this case, however, according to Mrs. Bendit's account, quite remarkable accuracy was achieved. The woman said that Miss Payne (as she then was) would marry a man "who is either a doctor, or who is in a profession associated with sharp bright instruments. . . . You will work together and write books together. You will travel together and neither of you will work alone in the future." Those who know of Dr. and Mrs. Bendit's work will appreciate that this prediction has been fulfilled. But as an indication that this main prediction would be fulfilled, the gypsy foretold that three minor incidents would occur within the next seven days: (1) That Miss Payne would receive a gift of stones. (2) The gift of a ring. (3) That on some very stony ground she would find two sprays of white heather where no other white heather grew. When these minor events occurred Miss Payne was naturally impressed. She was still more impressed when the larger issues developed because, as she says,

"they represented a turning-point in my life such as I had never even contemplated." §

As in so many other cases, it is the foreseeing of details which is the crux of the problem of precognition. We might reconcile ourselves to an acceptance of the possibility of foreseeing the major events in one's life, but what factors are involved when it can be foreseen that we shall find *within seven days* "two sprays of white heather where no other white heather grew?"

The direction in which a solution might be sought occurs to me in connection with this case—at least as far as the trivial events are concerned. Firstly, the fulfillment of the trivial episodes happened, I take it, while Miss Payne was visiting a friend, because she states: "I said nothing of all this to my hostess. . . . " Now it was Miss Payne's hostess who gave her "a box of unset cairngorm stones, beautifully cut." These she had intended to give Miss Payne the previous Christmas, but was too ill with influenza to send them. Then, three days later, Miss Payne received a registered parcel from London containing an old ring. It was from a friend who wrote: "I meant to leave you this ring in my Will, but I don't see why you should not have it now. . . . "

It will be noted that the intention to make these two gifts existed in the minds of Miss Payne's friends. Could the gypsy have "tuned in" to these intentions? The third episode, that of the white heather, occurred on the fifth day. Miss Payne's hostess suggested a picnic and it was on the way home that Miss Payne saw "growing in solitary beauty, two sprays of white heather. There was not another scrap in sight." Here again we may note that the heather was in existence at the time of the gypsy's pre-

diction. Was the hostess's intention for a picnic in her mind at the time of the prediction? Assuming that she had something planned, the gypsy's foreknowledge might have been derived telepathically from the hostess. But what about the white heather? We cannot solve this mystery. We need to know more about the hostess and the gypsy. Had they ever noticed isolated sprays of heather growing in the region where the picnic was held? Or, for that matter, had Miss Payne ever been there before?

The above tentative "explanation" might conceivably be pressed to fit the foreseeing of the trivial events in this particular case, but it breaks down on the major events; also the precise prediction that the events will occur within seven days complicates our attempts to explain. Moreover, it must be remembered that there are many other cases on record where the trivial events foreseen had no existence in any living mind at the time the prediction was made.

The next case is probably a combination of telepathy and precognition. It was related to my wife by an intimate friend, Mrs. L. H., who was living in Melbourne, Australia, during the first World War, though her home, where both her parents lived, was in the country. The accuracy of the account can be relied upon. Mrs. H. is a woman of outstanding character. She, together with her husband, later gained wide recognition for the refugee work they did in Europe after the close of the War. At the time of the following dream her only brother was serving at Gallipoli with an Australian contingent:

Case 42

§ Mrs. H. dreamed one night that she was alone in the house when the front doorbell rang, and she went downstairs to answer it. The postman handed her a letter addressed to herself, which she read while returning up the stairs. It was from a woman

whom she scarcely knew but who lived in her home town and from whom she could never have expected to receive a letter of any kind.

On awakening, Mrs. H. could still clearly see the letter, with its heading, signature and type of calligraphy, then entirely strange to her. She carefully wrote out the letter from memory and showed it to the people living in the house. Time went by and nothing happened, but one day, about a month or five weeks after the dream, she found herself alone in the house. The bell rang and she received her letter exactly as she had seen it in her dream. It briefly asked her to catch the first train back to her home, as it was advisable that she should be with her parents under existing conditions. Interpreting this as meaning that they were worrying unduly about their absent son, she caught the first available train home. She was met on arrival by the local clergyman, who told her he had been notified by the War Department that her brother had been killed, and he wished her to be with her parents when he broke the news. As he thought a letter from himself would prove to be a shock, he had asked the first available woman who knew her even slightly to write for him. Subsequent inquiries proved that the night of the dream was the night of her brother's death. §

It will be noted that Mrs. H.'s dream coincided with her brother's death, but news of the death did not arrive until about a month or five weeks later. Even if we suppose that the brother's death was a causative factor of the dream, how are we to account for the precognitive information given in the dream regarding the method by which news of his death would be conveyed? Once again, it is the details which lift dreams of this type out of the chance-coincidence class. If the dream had only foretold the brother's death it might, under war conditions, have merely ex-

pressed a latent fear. Actually the dream conveyed no information about any death, but, curiously, gave details of an unexpected letter from a stranger; also that the letter would be delivered to her while she was alone in the house.

The next case from my records is a precognition of an automobile accident. The account is written for me by Mr. John Pinkney, a young Australian journalist who is used to accurate reporting:

CASE 43

§ On December 25, 1956, I had an extremely vivid dream in which I was driving my car, a Volkswagen, down a steep hill. Suddenly I saw a car on the road ahead. It had stopped, so I stepped on my brakes. They failed, and I smashed into the car. I was jerked forward and my head went through the windscreen. I awoke from this dream in a state of terror, and had considerable difficulty in getting back to sleep. Next morning I told two witnesses about the dream. One was my mother, and the other a girl I was going with at that time.

That day, the girl and I decided to drive out to Ararat. On our way home, at 4:45 P.M., December 26, 1956, we drove down one of the steep hills just outside Bacchus Marsh. A car stopped ahead of us to wait for a big, lumbering cattle truck, which evidently had stalled. I stepped hard on my brakes, and then everything began to happen just as I'd dreamed it. I had a horrible feeling of inevitability as my car sped forward and smashed into the back of the other . . . a knowledge that all this had happened before. The only difference from the dream was that my head did *not* go through the windscreen. However, the girl's face was cut by flying glass.

I have had a similar dream about a smash. In this dream, a tram smashed into a car. Next morning I read in *The Sun* that

this incident had taken place in Fitzroy. I knew none of the people in this accident and it took place a few hours *before* I dreamed it. I had not heard the news on the radio. §

The first dream is clearly precognitive and was fulfilled exactly except that it was Mr. Pinkney's companion who was injured. In conversation Mr. Pinkney gave some further details which are important for the interpretation of this experience. The dream had upset him considerably. Consequently he decided to drive with extreme care. It will be recalled that in the dream the car brakes failed. At the time of the accident Mr. Pinkney *thought they had failed.* This greatly worried him because he thought the police might hold him responsible for driving a car without due care for its mechanical condition. However, the Bacchus Marsh police later reported that the brakes were in good order. What had happened was that the car had skidded on the wet road. This point is interesting as it illustrates what has been observed in other precognitions, namely, that precognitions are often knowledge of a future event as it will register in the percipient's mind. Mr. Pinkney in the first case cited precognized what was to be his opinion of the cause of the accident, and not what was the actual condition of the car brakes. In other words, he cognized his future mistaken opinion as well as the actual events of the accident.

At first glance, Mr. Pinkney's second dream is not precognitive since the event about which he dreamed had already happened (although he had no normal knowledge of it). However, the dream may be classified as precognitive, the precognition being of the *future reading of the newspaper account* of the tram smashing into the car.

The following four cases are experiences of Mrs. W. K. and, as in her other experiences cited above, they are related by her

husband, to whom the details were described at the time they occurred. Mrs. W. K. is quite accustomed to experiences of this type:

CASE 44

§ In June, 1947, Ivy [Mrs. W. K.] experienced a very definite feeling of fear regarding the prevailing epidemic of polio (in England) at that time. She knew intuitively that some threat, within the family circle, was imminent. A few weeks later, in August, our eldest boy, Martin, then aged thirteen, was invited to a picnic by a school friend and his family. Within a few days the friend was in the hospital with polio and Martin became an official "suspect," having been in such close contact with him during the day of the picnic. Fortunately, Martin did not contract the illness, but Ivy herself suffered a relatively mild attack of polio during this same period. Although no other members of the family contracted the disease, they were all necessarily subject to suspicion as "contacts."

CASE 45

At Christmas, 1954, we were spending the holiday in a country cottage. Ivy, who was sitting quietly at her embroidery, became impelled to write in her diary a note to remind her to write to two friends of hers (who are sisters and live in England) on a certain date, which was then about ten days ahead. Although there was no special reason for writing, especially on that particular day, Ivy made the note in her diary and awaited the passing of the ten days before writing to the sisters. It so happened that when this date actually arrived she could hardly bring herself to the task of writing a letter because there was apparently so little to write about. However, she made the effort and started a letter. Without consciously intending to do so, she

began to discuss the subject of death and the after-life and the fact that the long geographical distance between themselves and her did not really amount to any obstacle so far as spiritual affinity is concerned, or sympathetic rapport. Having completed this letter, Ivy hesitated to send it as it was so different from her usual style in writing to these friends, with whom correspondence generally was concerned with everyday family and topical affairs. The letter was posted, however, and reached England about six days later. The two sisters immediately replied, informing Ivy that their mother had died suddenly on the day Ivy had written the letter—the date which she had earmarked in her diary (for that letter) ten days in advance of the mother's death. Judging by the very unusual tone of Ivy's letter, and knowing of her psychic tendencies, they could hardly believe that she did not actually know (psychically) of their bereavement. §

The curious feature of this precognition is the psychic impulse to note a date and for this date to prove to be the one on which the death of her friends' mother occurred. Some part of Mrs. W. K.'s consciousness apparently knew of the approaching death about ten days ahead.

Case 46

§ It is not often that a definite time-factor is included in the prevision, but here is a case of it: The house in Hobart in which we now live was purchased in April, 1954. At the time of making this decision we were both pleased with the prospect of moving into this house for a number of reasons, but Ivy knew without any doubt whatever that this house would be associated with very serious illness (or even death), which would occur eighteen months from that time. The impression was received in the form of a picture of the house surrounded by a gloomy and

shadowy cloud, while the time-factor of eighteen months was heard clairaudiently. Although there are six of us in the family (including an elderly relative), Ivy knew that this illness would strike either me or herself—not any other member of the family.

Having settled in the house, we naturally tried to forget this unwelcome foreknowledge, and it was not until some time after the event that the true realization of its significance registered in our minds.

In the early part of October, 1955, *exactly* eighteen months after the psychic impression, Ivy suffered a severe coronary occlusion, and three weeks later a second attack occurred. A long period of slow recovery followed, which even now (1958) is not by any means complete. §

This is a remarkable precognition because it was fulfilled within the precise period of eighteen months. It is indeed unusual, as Mr. W. K. remarks, for the time-factor to be given so exactly. It will be noted that the time was "heard" clairaudiently and was not estimated by a process of interpretation of symbols, as is often the case.

The following case, again witnessed by Mr. W. K. and written by him regarding his wife's experience, is described as one of her most striking precognitive visions. It occurred in 1948:

Case 47

§ This picture was an extremely colorful scene of a jetty surrounded by intensely blue water, a background of rocky shore. Ivy viewed this scene from a point on the jetty itself. The chief interest, however, lay in the fact that two sailors, whom Ivy judged to be French because of the red pom-poms on their caps, were leaning over a nearby rail, so placed that they were almost facing Ivy, and looking out over the water. The vision was

so strong and vivid as to become permanently stamped on her memory.

The fulfillment came about in September, 1953, when Ivy and I were on a three weeks' visit to Sydney. (We had arrived in Hobart in April, 1950, and this was our first visit to the Mainland.) One afternoon Ivy decided to go to Taronga Park Zoo: she went by ferry, and having spent an interesting afternoon there, walked onto the jetty to board the return ferry boat. Being too early, she sat on the jetty covering her eyes from the very bright sunlight. Suddenly, on glancing towards the shore, she received quite a shock to see the picture of her prevision, in exact detail, with the two French sailors (red pom-poms and all) leaning over the rail precisely as they had been in the original "picture." It so happened that a French boat was in port at Sydney and the sailors were presumably on a sight-seeing tour. §

The above case might at first glance be regarded as precognition of a trivial incident, but I include it here because, although the incident itself is trivial, its fulfillment required a major move from England to Australia, with all that this entails. It would seem, therefore, that the transfer to Australia was predetermined, but that, curiously enough, only this fragmentary picture got through to the ordinary consciousness.

The following case has been given to me by Mr. W. J. Judging by his correspondence, he appears to me to be critical in outlook and well-read:

Case 48

§ After a sojourn of some years abroad, I visited Adelaide. At that time, I doubt that more than one person in that city knew me personally. That person, a lady, introduced me to a couple of her friends. Discussing entertainment, someone suggested a

visit to a medium. They had heard of one who lived some miles away. I was then directed to the house and went in alone. The main items of her talk relative to our present theme were: In a few weeks' time I would be going to either Melbourne or Sydney. There by appointment, in a large public building, I would meet two men—one tall, the other short and dark. A long paper would be produced on which were many clauses, with a number of lines at the base. To one of these clauses I would take exception. "Don't deal with the tall man, deal only with the short man and he will concede to your wishes," the medium said.

Some two months later I was called to Sydney. (This was contrary to my expectations as Melbourne was usually my center.) In virtue of an appointment made by the other party, I went to the Wentworth Hotel and there I met two men who had only that day arrived from abroad. One of them was tall, the other short and dark. I had met the tall man some years earlier, but not the other, as this was his first visit to Australia. A paper (a contract) was produced. There was one clause in it to which I took exception because it appeared to prejudice my interests. I called for an alteration. The tall man demurred. We discussed it. Here the short man intervened. He agreed with my view. He took the paper, made the necessary alterations, initialled it, and we all signed on the line at the base of the paper. (This short man was a director and senior to the other man, hence his control of the situation.) Thus the precognition was remarkably accurate, for the two men only arrived in Sydney several weeks *after* the medium's statement. They could hardly have had any prior knowledge of the meeting with me and the clause disagreement, as the whole business was relatively unimportant to them. §

The next case to be presented is a precognition of a most unusual incident. The odds against chance coincidence as an

explanation would be incalculably high. The account has been written out for me by Mrs. Y. L., a violinist in a well-known symphony orchestra:

CASE 49

§ I dreamt that my violin, a valuable one, was burning in the lounge-room of my home. When I discovered it, I put the fire out with my hands; that is, I *saw* my hands (or someone's hands) putting it out, but I was puzzled in the dream because I felt no burning of my hands.

Three or four days later (within a week) I was traveling in a fairly crowded tram with a friend (now sister-in-law), and was alarmed by a strong smell of burning; at first I thought it must be some part of my clothing. I then noticed a hole in the corner of my violin-case, burning around the edges and rapidly spreading, presumably caused by someone's cigarette butt. My first thought was to get the violin onto the floor to stamp the fire out with my foot, but before I had time to do this, my sister-in-law put it out with her hands, which struck me at the time as being rather plucky, as I would not have done this.

It was not until the next day that I remembered the dream, and the impression of seeing a pair of hands, which I had thought were mine in the dream, putting out the fire, and wondering why I had felt no pain. §

It will be noticed that in the dream the violin was burning "in the lounge-room," whereas in fact it was in a tram that the burning was detected. Apart from this, the other details of the dream are remarkably accurate, even to the hands putting out the flame without getting burned.

It is hardly necessary to labor the point that the number of cases where valuable violins are burned must be rare beyond

computation, so this dream ranks high among precognitive dreams of unusual and unexpected events.

I have included this particular case as a precognition of a significant event although the incident itself was trivial. Yet the consequences of losing this valuable violin would have been serious for the owner.

The final case to be presented in this chapter was received through the courtesy of Dr. Ian Stevenson, Chairman of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry, Medical School of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia:

Case 50

§ This dream occurred some five years ago when the percipient, a 31-year-old housewife, was about seven months pregnant with her first baby. She dreamed one night that she was having the baby without anesthetic by normal delivery and that the baby would not cry. The dream seemed vivid and awoke her. She woke her husband (who testified to this) and told him the dream. At the time she expected to have the baby by Caesarean section, as she had diabetes. She therefore also expected to have an anesthetic.

One month later the baby came, somewhat prematurely, and as she was far from the nearest hospital (120 miles away), the labor was far advanced by the time she got there. She had no anesthetic, but delivered fully conscious an hour after arriving at the hospital. The baby did not cry as it was stillborn. It seemed like an exact re-living of her dream, as if she had been through the same experience twice. §

The time-interval between two events has in theory no bearing in determining our judgment as to whether or not precognitions of more remote events are less likely than those of nearer ones. The precognitions themselves are in the present, and the time-factor is subsequent.

6 *Longer Range Precognitions*

How far ahead can the future be foreseen? This is a question which we will examine when we consider the various theories which have been advanced to account for precognition. Belief in prophecy is as old as history, and scriptural prophecy is a dominant interest for thousands today. The extent of the interest in prophecy is well evidenced by the growth of movements such as that of the British-Israelites, who base their prophecies on the Biblical texts, supported in many cases by a belief that the Great Pyramid of Cheops is really a monument of prophecy. A tremendous amount of research and painstaking calculation has been devoted to the study of the Great Pyramid. It is not my purpose to examine the data these people present; however, I do mention them as evidence of the widespread belief that it is possible to foresee the distant future.

In this connection, those who are interested will find some striking predictions in the quatrains of Nostradamus. Michel de Nostradamus was born in 1503. He became a learned man, a physician and a seer. There seems to be little doubt that he was endowed with some form of natural clairvoyance. He recorded

his visions in what are called Centuries of verses. The first edition of these was published in March, 1555. The prophecies cover a period of hundreds of years, indeed of thousands! They would provide wonderful evidence of long-range prediction if it were not for their obscure wording. Nevertheless, some of them seem clear enough when they are fulfilled or, at any rate, when events occur which seem to fulfil them, and many believe that they *are* fulfilled.

Longer range predictions are not, in theory, more improbable than shorter ones, but they are less subject to proof. Astrological predictions, of course, figure largely in long-range forecasts, but since my studies have never taken me in this direction I refrain from expressing any opinion as to their evidential value. One is naturally prejudiced against astrology by the trite generalities so often published and by the flagrant commercialism associated with the subject. From a few instances I have read it would appear that there are some accurate astrological predictions on record. But even in cases where reasonably detailed events have been predicted, there is a probability that genuine psi faculty is involved and that the horoscope is merely a device in terms of which the faculty can work. Be this as it may, I do suggest that if there is a science of astrology, as its adherents claim, then the principles on which it is based need more convincing exposition. Jung's Principle of Synchronicity may here be of some assistance —see his commentary on Richard Wilhelm's translation of the Chinese classic, *I Ching*. According to this principle, the relationship between events is not to be conceived in terms of causality, but as one where events have, as it were, meaningful coexistence. If such a principle were accepted, the planets might be regarded not as causal factors, but as a kind of sign-writing pointing to certain synchronicities. An interesting review by Professor H. H. Price of a later book by C. G. Jung deals further

with this Principle of Synchronicity (*Journal* S.P.R., Vol. 37, 1953, pp. 26ff.). In a later chapter I will refer again to this conception. At the moment we are concerned with the data of precognition and even if astrological predictions of first quality evidential standards were available, they would not be precognitions in the usual sense of the term. However, it was necessary to refer to astrological predictions as they are popularly regarded as long-range forecasts of the future.

Reverting now to cases strictly within the field of psychical research, it will be appreciated that the longer the period covered by a prediction, the more difficult it is to prove its genuineness. Firstly, the original form of the prediction is often modified, and secondly, subsequent generations read into it more than is there, for usually the predictions are cryptic or symbolical. The prophecies of Nostradamus and scriptural prophecies are cases in point. In fact, one might say that if long-range prophecy is a fact it must tend to be expressed in symbolical form, for if the predictions are not to be realized for, say, hundreds of years, the language itself will have changed. We are therefore committed to study only *comparatively* long-range predictions which can be verified. Very long-range predictions may have to be studied in terms of some law of cycles. This we will consider later.

A remarkable case of two wars being precognized is one reported by Dr. M. Amedée Tardieu, consulting physician at Mont-Dore. The account was published by Caesar de Vesme in the *Annales de Sciences Psychiques* (No. 3, 1915). Dr. Osty also reports the experience in *Supernormal Faculties in Man* (1923, pp. 38–40). This case is well-documented and Dr. Tardieu guarantees its accuracy on his "word of honor." The predictions were made by Leon Sonrel, "a scientific man of the highest type." M. Sonrel often went into a kind of hypnotic state. It was on the

23rd or 24th of July, 1869, that the predictions were made to his friend Dr. Tardieu. I summarize and itemize the predictions as follows:

CASE 51

§ (1) A war is foreseen. (2) Dr. Tardieu is seen counting money at the Gare du Nord and then proceeding by train to Sedan. (3) Sees a disastrous defeat of the French at Sedan. (4) Foresees Paris besieged and himself as a superior officer. (5) His own death at the siege of Paris is foreseen to occur in three days. (6) His wife will be pregnant of a child which he will never see.

Then for Dr. Tardieu he predicts:

(7) That he will not remain in Paris to work at the Medical School, but will go to the provinces and be politically employed. (8) That he will marry and have children. (9) Sees him weeping at the bedside of a dying woman whom he loves. (10) The occurrence of a certain scientific fact which will be epoch-making in Dr. Tardieu's life. (11) Foresees another disaster for France: "My country is lost! France is slain!" (12) Predicted France would be saved and go to the Rhine. §

These predictions were fulfilled with remarkable accuracy. Items 1 through 4 were fulfilled in the following manner: As is well known, France did suffer a disastrous defeat at Sedan in 1870. Dr. Tardieu as foreseen traveled to Sedan. He was in charge of the 8th Red Cross Ambulance. And still more remarkable, the prediction that Dr. Tardieu would be "counting money at the Gare du Nord" was fulfilled, for Dr. Tardieu reports that they solicited help for the wounded and collected 36,000 francs and Dr. Tardieu "counted over this money in the station to the cash-

ier of the Society." Paris was besieged and Leon Sonrel was gazetted major in the subsidiary corps of Engineers.

Items 5 and 6 were also fulfilled, as follows: Sonrel took black smallpox and died in three days. His wife was in the third month of pregnancy and gave birth to a son seven months after the death of her husband. Thus these predictions were fulfilled in detail.

The predictions for Dr. Tardieu himself (items 7 through 10) also came true. Dr. Tardieu left Paris and was appointed Councillor in the Puy-de-Dome. In 1874 he married. His wife faded slowly from an encysted liver and died, leaving him with two little girls. Items 11 and 12, of course, relate to the 1914 war. When in 1912 the predicted scientific finding occurred (item 10), Dr. Tardieu judged that new trials for France were near. He warned his friends and in April, 1914, he went to Professor Charles Richet and communicated to him the whole of the Sonrel prediction. These predictions cover a period of about 49 years if the forecast of France's eventual victory is included.

As I have already said, long-range predictions inevitably suffer from the defect that they are seldom written down at the time they are made. It is usually only when some of the events begin to come true that a record is made. But we should not discard such reports purely on this account. If we do we shall lose much good material. Some predictions relate to events so definite and dramatic that when the events come to pass the memory of the prediction flashes vividly and accurately into the mind. It is unlikely that Dr. Tardieu's memory could fail to register accurately such predictions as the death of his friend in three days, or the disasters for France, or the other equally definite occurrences as itemized above. It is admittedly on the testimony of Dr. Tardieu alone that this case rests. But not entirely

so, because in April, 1912, he did communicate the Sonrel predictions to Professor Richet, and this was before the 1914–1918 War.

The following is a prediction of the duration of the Second World War. It is from Mrs. I. F. Acford of Melbourne, Australia:

CASE 52

§ The night before the Second World War broke out we were living near London. I had an 18-month-old baby, who at that time could not be fitted with a gas-mask. It was a fearful time. That night I went to bed in an agony of apprehension. To make matters worse, a terrible thunderstorm broke, which to my imagination sounded like the shape of things to come. I fell into a restless sleep during which my [deceased] mother appeared to me and said, "This War will last six years."

Although my whole mind revolted at the idea that the war could last six years, I never failed to tell my family and friends of my dream, which was, as usual, perfectly true. §

This dream has been corroborated by Mrs. Acford's sister in England and also by her husband. Mr. Acford writes as follows:

§ I have much pleasure in corroborating the statements made to you by my wife in connection with the prophetic dreams she has experienced from time to time; the most vivid of these being the predictions of the death of an uncle within nine days of the event and while he was in good health, and the prediction regarding the duration of World War II. This latter prophecy was made the night before the official declaration of War—September 3, 1939. §

Mrs. Acford's sister, Mrs. M. E. Bell, of England, writes:

§ I distinctly remember the prophecy where my mother appeared to my sister and said that Uncle George had nine or ten days to live. I also remember her telling us about the War lasting for six years. §

[I have not given the details of Mrs. Acford's dream of the death of her Uncle George as it is similar to many other cases of the prediction of death, a few examples of which were given in Chapter Three.]

The prediction of the duration of World War II is of considerable interest. The general expectancy in 1939 certainly was not that the war would last as long as six years. Admittedly the "guessing range" of possible duration periods was not a wide one and to pick six years might not be a statistically significant "guess." Statistical analysis, however, misses the manner in which the information was conveyed. We note the sense of certainty which caused Mrs. Acford repeatedly to tell her family and friends about her dream which obviously impressed her deeply—and this in spite of all her hopes that the dream would prove to be false.

The final cases to be quoted in this chapter are also examples of foreseeing the fairly distant future. I have received them through the courtesy of my friend Dr. Raynor C. Johnson. They were sent to him by Air Marshal Sir Victor Goddard and it is with his kind permission that I am now able to quote them. The status of the narrator is a guarantee of the accuracy of the accounts. Sir Victor Goddard writes:

Case 53

§ Please don't suppose that I think I am a prophet. I do not. But there have been times when I have "seen." And I want to say something to you about different kinds of seeing.

My "seeing" in 1911 that war with Germany was not going to be until 1914 was perhaps only a hunch. And yet I remember a feeling that I had seen and said something that was true; something that had come to me.

On the evening before that war began I stood on the deck of an old battleship called *Victorious*. I was looking at the evening sky. There was a great white formation of cloud catching the light, and a black mass of cloud to the East. The white cloud-mass formed into, as it were, a map of the British Isles. The black mass of cloud, separated by a sea of blue sky, resembled the shape of Europe nearest to us; it seemed to begin to overwhelm the white, and then it receded and disintegrated, and its blackness faded into pink.

That "picture" did not persist for long. But at the time I "*saw*" that our country was not going to be overwhelmed by Germany. The point I want to make is this: never after that moment did I ever think that we would be defeated. The "vision" I had was not up in the clouds: it was within me. I was able, because of that assurance, to go through World War I with never a doubt about the outcome, even in the darkest days. §

Another of Sir Victor Goddard's precognitions is the following, which I have abbreviated:

CASE 54

§ In the winter of 1934 I was flying an airplane, it was a Hawker "Hart"—a mighty fast plane for those days! (In fact, it was in a plane of that type that, in the following year, I held the Edinburgh to London speed record.) In the cloud and fog and heavy rain I had come spiraling down 8,000 feet, out of control all the way. So I was wondering whether I should plunge into the moun-

tains of Scotland, or into the Firth of Forth, before I got my "Hart" under control again . . .

My Hawker "Hart" was at last under control; my personal heart was not—it was in my throat . . . I flew straight on, climbing slightly to clear the foreshore. I said to myself, "If I go straight on, I'll hit off Drem Airfield. That is, if I'm going where I think I am, and going the way I think I'm going." In a few minutes, sure enough, through the murk the old hangars of Drem loomed ahead—black in the rain and about half a mile ahead. We're about to come to the point of this story, but first I must tell you about Drem. I had been at Drem on the ground only the day before. I knew the place and had known it for years. It was built as an aerodrome during World War I. I knew it then. After that war it was abandoned and gradually the buildings fell into ruin. The hangars were used by the farmer as cow-byres and as barns for his crops and farm machinery. The roofs were falling in; the airfield was cut up into many grazing meadows for sheep and cattle, divided off by barbed wire fences. (I had seen all that the day before.)

But next day as I approached Drem in foul weather after my hair-raising experience over Leith, I wanted something to restore my confidence before I again tried to climb through those turbulent clouds. For I was due to be at Andover, in Hampshire, that morning. I was fast approaching those old derelict airplane hangars, then used for barns and cow-byres, at Drem. I climbed through the deluge of rain to the misty base of the continuous low cloud overhead. The hangars were darkly looming towards me only a quarter of a mile away. Then, suddenly, the area was bathed in an ethereal light as though the sun were shining on a mid-summer day. As I raced over the airfield boundary and along the line of those four double hangars, I saw some surprising things.

Evidently, as I saw it, the rain had recently stopped. The airfield, all unfenced, was evenly mown; no cattle or sheep were grazing. The tarmac around the hangars was wide and new, the hangars all had sound new roofs, the doors of the first hangar were open and five aircraft—all bright yellow (four of them biplanes, one a monoplane)—were lined up on the tarmac. Mechanics in blue overalls were pushing out another monoplane. The men below were not interested in me as I sped over them not more than *fifty feet* above the hangars and I flew out of the "sunshine" into dark rain and mist again, and into the climb which I immediately began through the clouds to clear the hidden mountains beyond. I was keyed to my flying. But I was full of wonder. I knew that I had been "seeing things." I also knew that what I had seen was there. It was real . . . There was a difference in quality between the seeming reality of a dream and the *felt* reality of that vision.

In 1938 Drem was rebuilt and reopened as a Flying Training School. What I had seen as I flew over, and described to friends, came to pass four years later in all its novel details. And then I knew that I had to sort out my ideas about free will and fate and determinism. §

It should be added that when Sir Victor Goddard got to Andover he told his Airforce friends what he had seen, but they indulged in the usual banter one would expect in such company and suggested that he should drink less of the local beverage! Nevertheless, the "vision" was related to others and indeed was described in a letter to the lady of the house where he had been staying; but all she wrote in reply was "How peculiar!"

It would be easy to quote many other cases of predictions covering long, or fairly long, periods. There are, for instance, the prophecies of the Scottish seers, some of which took centuries

to work out, such as the well-known Seaforth prophecy made by a local seer, Coinneach, in the seventeenth century during the reign of Charles the Second. This prophecy covers a period of many generations and concerns the doom of the Seaforths. It is most striking to read and parts of it are quite detailed. According to the prophecy, the last chief of the Seaforths will be both deaf and dumb and the father of four sons, all of whom he will follow to the grave. And so the prophecy goes on, giving the signs by which it will be known that these events are coming to pass. If these and similar prophecies could be accepted, they would indeed provide valuable data. For instance, consider the detail that during the days of the last of the Seaforths there will be four great lairds, one to be "buck-toothed, another hare-lipped, another halfwitted and the fourth a stammerer." It would appear that many have been impressed by this prophecy, but it is not of the type to which serious students of psychical phenomena pay much attention for it cannot be subjected to rigorous verification. Nevertheless, I do not think we can dismiss these and many other long-range prophecies as having no basis in fact. Indeed, I feel it could be a rewarding piece of research if a detailed investigation were made of the field of long-range predictions. Osty suggests one line of research in this direction. A series of experiments could be planned in which the future of a human being as yet unborn could be cognized, presumably through the mother-to-be. The delineations of the characters and of the events in the lives of these unborn persons would then be recorded for future generations. But, as Osty remarks, current investigations, the results of which can be verified at short date, are more pressing and it is thus unlikely that such a line of research will ever be pursued.

There are some who find their satisfaction in measuring and counting. The proofs they seek must be presented in figures. These they may have in abundance in the records of modern psychical research, although what they gain in precision they lose in quality.

7 *Experiments Designed to Assess the Role of Chance Coincidence*

One of the questions which persistently dog the mind when endeavoring to estimate the evidential value of spontaneous cases is how much we must allow for the possibility of chance coincidence. In the hundreds of accounts of spontaneous cases scattered in the literature of psychical research, far too many details are involved to make coincidence probable as a basis for understanding the phenomena. If all these cases could be massed together in a few volumes, with all the evidential items tabulated, a clear picture would be formed of a massive body of evidence for the paranormal and we might realize that to invoke the hypothesis of chance coincidence is only another way of dismissing the problem without a reasonable attempt to come to grips with it. Even the cases in my own records (some of which are in this book), although not submitted as evidence, would, *taken as a whole,* strain the chance-coincidence theory beyond reasonable limits.

Spontaneous and Experimental Material Compared

While I am one of those who believe that spontaneous cases provide adequate evidence for the reality of precognition (as well as for the other forms of psi), I nevertheless welcome the statistical data now available. Obviously spontaneous psi phenomena had to precede the statistical examination of the problem, for it was these which directed attention to the fact that there was a problem to be investigated. Moreover, it must be observed that it is only in the spontaneous cases (or in the quasi-experimental mediumistic cases) that we get the real qualitative nature of paranormal experience.

The data which can be evaluated statistically are inevitably weak in quality. That is why the statistical techniques used to evaluate the results of controlled experiments have to be finely enough forged to reveal even the slightest manifestations of psi faculty. A controlled experiment may be likened to a Geiger counter, which detects weak radiations of uranium. But it is the uranium itself we are seeking, and we would never understand its properties if we studied it only by means of Geiger counters. Similarly, generalizations based entirely on quantitative data will mislead unless supplemented by the rich quality of spontaneous paranormal material.

The Nature of the Target when a Person is Cognized

When an attempt is made to examine a spontaneous case from the statistical point of view, it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory basis for forming an estimate as to the odds against chance coincidence. Yet it is clear from the commonsense point of view that in many cases the odds must be of such an order as

to compel a recognition that some factor other than chance is operative. Consider, for example, a single case, not exactly of the spontaneous type, but one which is typical of a large category of paranormal cognitions:

A sensitive or medium is given an article to psychometrize and is asked to describe the owner of the article and the future which awaits him. The sensitive of course has no normal knowledge of who the owner of the article is or of anything about him. (See, for example, Case 13.) Assuming that the medium is only guessing, consider the odds against correct guesses. Firstly, there is a wide field for error in describing the unknown person's sex, age, appearance and character. Then, as to the events which await him in the future, there are changes of location, such as countries, towns or districts he may visit. A variety of occupations and changes of occupation, together with possible successes or failures at various times and places, present themes for guessing. The marital state alone is a difficult guessing hazard. Is the person married, single or divorced? If married, how many children are there, what are their ages, sexes and where are they? Or are there any children at all? Perhaps some of them have died. Then we have to consider the many personal contacts to be made and what effect the meeting with certain people will have. Where and under what circumstances will we meet these people? Also there are illnesses, and not only illnesses, but the specific type of illness and when and where it occurs. Similarly with accidents: they occur under many conditions and are of varying types, trivial or serious. And finally, there is death, its date, nature and the conditions under which it will occur. So we could continue indefinitely to itemize the possible incidents of a person's life. As I have already suggested, anyone who cares to test his capacity for guessing correctly the nature and circumstances

of an unknown person should do so and then compare his score with those of some of Osty's sensitives as reported in *Supernormal Faculties in Man* (1923).

Now all these and other factors which differ subtly from person to person represent a situation of great complexity for our hypothetical guesser. In other words, he is faced with an indefinite number of incidents and of times and places about which he is asked to guess. In instances where the score is good, how can we statistically estimate its success? We can, of course, count the hits and balance them with the misses. But is this a fair evaluation of the situation? Obviously not, because we should also take into account the almost infinite scope for guessing wrongly when attempts are made to cognize such complicated targets. The successes, therefore, in spontaneous cases and quasi-experimental cases such as those described above are often far greater than appears on the surface. However, the answer to this statistical problem is obvious: it is to limit the target, and this is precisely what is done in the controlled experiments.

Before going on to the section on controlled experiments, one further observation might be made. It is frequently stated that the only way in which chance coincidence can be evaluated as a possible explanation of spontaneous psi phenomena occurring in dreams, and especially in allegedly precognitive dreams, is to have a record of *all* the dreams of a particular person which purport to be precognitive. It is argued that if we have such a record, we will note the failures as well as the successes. The procedure of recording all apparently precognitive dreams (and waking experiences) is excellent. But the point arises as to how the data should be assessed. Are all the dreams to be dealt with as a whole? Or are they to be classified into types? The number of incidents about which we may dream is infinite and in estimating the probabilities against chance coincidence I suggest that

dreams should be assessed in their categories. Over a long enough period there are sure to be a number of dreams which relate to future events and probably chance will account for this. If, however, a particular dream is assessed in relation to this type of event which it purports to predict, we then have a limited target and can better estimate the probability of it being a chance coincidence. For example, Mrs. Pritchard (Case 17) dreamed that her husband died while preaching. In assessing the value of this dream I suggest that the only dreams of Mrs. Pritchard's which are relevant are those relating to death. It is admitted that she often felt anxious when her husband was preaching. Now suppose we had a record of many dreams to the effect that her husband would die while preaching, then if one of these dreams came true we could reasonably say that chance only was operative; that is, assuming the dream or dreams contained only the one item that her husband would die while preaching. Actually the dream was more specific, for it brought into prominence the velvet curtains and the fact that she would make her way through a great crowd.

The question I am asking here, however, is how we can evaluate this and similar dreams statistically. This of course is a problem for expert statisticians, but it seems to me that if all Mrs. Pritchard's apparently precognitive dreams on every conceivable subject are thrown into a pool, the hits with the misses, then the resulting statistical average would drown the real precognitive evidence of dreams such as that of the velvet curtains.

Dreams are not, in any case, the best material for statistical treatment. A series of experiments with sensitives along the lines suggested by Dr. Osty appeals to me as a more profitable line of investigation. In this way we do not lose the qualitative character of the paranormal capacities of the sensitive. Moreover, it is virtually a repeatable experiment for, as in Osty's case, we can

arrange for regular sittings with a number of sensitives and apply all the usual safeguards. It involves a good deal of methodical planning, a sound card-index system and, last but not least, time and patience; but the results may well be worth the trouble.

However, there will always be those who feel more at home with quantitative data. Just as statistical techniques play so important a part in modern affairs generally, so psychical researchers in recent years have endeavored to subject the peculiar phenomena they investigate to statistical evaluation. In this they have been remarkably successful, as is evidenced by the work of J. B. Rhine, G. N. M. Tyrrell, Whately Carington and S. G. Soal, to mention only a few of the leaders in this field. What some of these results are we will now briefly consider.

Controlled Experiments

Most controlled experiments in extrasensory perception (ESP) are carried out using special decks of cards developed in the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University. Usually referred to as "ESP cards" (formerly called Zener cards), each deck consists of 25 cards, five each of the following symbols: *Star, Cross, Circle, Square,* and *Wavy Lines.* Here we have a limited target and the odds against chance for any obtained result can easily be calculated. A subject attempting to identify the order of the cards in the deck would be expected by chance to guess correctly one symbol out of five, or five out of 25. If he consistently averages more than five "hits" per run in many runs through the deck, there are statistical techniques available to tell us just what the odds are against his results being due to chance. If the probability is very small, then we may safely conclude that something other than chance is operating.

But in order to interpret statistically significant results as evidence for telepathy, clairvoyance, or precognition, we must be sure that great care has been taken in designing the experiment and safeguarding the conditions under which it is performed. The cards must be thoroughly shuffled (or arranged in accordance with tables of random numbers), agent and percipient must be isolated so that no sensory clues can pass between them, and many other stringent conditions have to be satisfied. (The reader wishing to acquaint himself with modern experimental techniques is referred to *Modern Experiments in Telepathy,* Yale University, New Haven, 1954 and *Parapsychology: Frontier Science of the Mind,* by J. B. Rhine and J. G. Pratt, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1957.)

J. B. Rhine and his associates at the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University (Durham, North Carolina) from 1938 onwards pioneered in quantitative ESP research and some of their results (as well as the results of experiments carried out in other American laboratories) cannot easily be attributed to chance. Meanwhile, in England, the late Whately Carington was carrying out a series of long-distance telepathy experiments. He used pictures instead of ESP cards. The original intention was to use cards but, acting on the suggestion of some of his colleagues, Carington decided to use pictures as his target material because they had more human interest. The procedure was in general as follows:

On each of ten successive evenings a different simple drawing was made either by Carington himself or by his wife. A drawing was exposed at 7 P.M. in his study in Cambridge (suitably curtained and guarded) and left in position until 9:30 A.M. the next morning. Percipients were provided with special books containing ten blank pages on which they were asked to draw the pictures they guessed were exposed in Carington's study. This mon-

umental piece of work was carried out with scrupulous care and highly qualified skill. About 250 percipients of both sexes, in Great Britain and the United States, took part, producing some 2,200 drawings. The results may be summarized in Carington's own words:

§ A total of 1,209 drawings were found which were judged to be sufficiently like one or other of the originals [target pictures] to deserve mention. From the data it is possible to calculate how many of the resemblances or "hits" would be "winners," i.e. hits on originals used in their own experiment, if chance alone were operative, and how often this value would be exceeded by any given amount. It is found that the excess is such as would be equalled or surpassed only once in some thirty thousand such investigations if chance alone were responsible (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. XLVI, 1940, p. 129). §

But what is of main interest and relevance here is the surprising fact that one of the striking relationships between the percipients' impressions and the target pictures was shown to be *precognitive;* that is to say, the percipients scored significantly on pictures which not only *had not yet been exposed,* but which had not even been drawn and whose subject-matter had not yet been chosen.

Now it so happened that S. G. Soal, a mathematician of the University of London, had for some years been endeavoring to repeat J. B. Rhine's work with ESP cards, but had come to the conclusion that it was impossible. Soal had without any apparent success tested 160 persons and recorded 128,350 guesses. Then, as he expressed it, his "growing skepticism received a shock." It was Carington's results which caused this. Soal yielded to Carington's persuasion and re-examined his own data in the light of

Carington's displacement effects. Carington suggested that Soal should compare "each guess, not with the card for which it was originally intended, but with the immediately preceding and immediately following card and count up the hits."

Soal's re-examination of his data led to the discovery that two of his subjects, Mrs. Gloria Stewart and Mr. Basil Shackleton, had scored remarkably. Analysis of Mrs. Stewart's data showed that she had scored significantly both on the card immediately *preceding* the target card (−1 hit, postcognitive) and the card immediately *following* the target card (+1 hit, precognitive). The over-all results in Mrs. Stewart's case revealed that the odds were of the order of a million to one against this finding being due to chance. In Shackleton's case it was the precognitive (+1) successes which were predominant. Here again the successes were far in excess of those which might have occurred if chance alone were operative (S. G. Soal and F. Bateman, *Modern Experiments in Telepathy*, pp. 309ff.).

Commenting on Soal's experiments, Professor C. D. Broad writes:

§ There may have been other experiments on paranormal cognition in which the conditions were *in fact* as rigid as they were in these; but I do not think that there have been any in which *we know* them to have been so rigid as *we know* them to have been here" (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. XLVI, 1940, p. 29). §

In the sense that precognition implies the foreseeing of events in the future which do not exist at the time when they are foreseen, it can be argued that the Soal (+1) effects are not, strictly speaking, precognitive. The cards which were precognized did actually exist and therefore theoretically could have been clairvoyantly perceived. In actual fact, however, the evidence points

to the fact that clairvoyance was not involved, and subsequent tests with Shackleton in Soal's opinion showed that "the precognitive and postcognitive effects obtained were almost certainly of a telepathic (rather than clairvoyant) character" (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. XLVII, 1942, p. 35). It should also be mentioned that in this particular series of experiments the odds against chance were more than 10^{35} to one.

It is tempting to analyze these experiments further for the light they shed on the working of psi faculty; however, I do not desire to burden the reader with statistical data which are of interest only to specialists in this field. It may be necessary to refer to these cases when we come to consider hypotheses. For the moment what we should note is that precognition has been demonstrated to occur under conditions of strictest control. In the case of Carington's experiments with free drawings, the precognition was on drawings not yet drawn, and in the experiments of Soal, the simplest hypothesis seems to be that Shackleton somehow became "cognizant of what is going to be in the agent's mind about two and a half seconds later."

We should realize that the statistical approach to paranormal phenomena is a very restricted one. Admittedly it does go far to lay the ghost of chance coincidence. But the phenomena themselves are too rich and varied to be contained within the limits of experiments such as those of Rhine, Carington, Soal, and others. It is very much like dealing with people in terms of statistical averages and so arriving at the concept of "the man in the street." The "man in the street" is an abstraction; no one has ever met such a being; similarly with generalizations regarding the nature of the paranormal based only on the results of quantitative experiments.

Nevertheless, experimental data which can be subjected to statistical analysis are most important: firstly, as I have already

said, statistical analysis tells us exactly how likely it is that the results can be ascribed to chance, and secondly, it serves to elucidate special aspects of the phenomena. With regard to skeptics as to the reality of psi, and of course assuming that they have minds open to evidence, the researches of Rhine, Soal, Tyrrell, Carington, Thouless and others are available for their critical examination. Should they need assurance of the validity of the statistical techniques used, they will find it. In the words of C. D. Broad, "if there be any statistical fallacy in Mr. Whately Carington's paper, it has eluded not only myself (a very feeble defence), and not only Dr. Thouless and Mr. Gatty (who have constantly to use and to appraise statistical reasoning in the course of their psychological and biological work), but also Dr. Irwin, who is an expert professional statistician" (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. XLVI, 1940, p. 30).

The statistical experiments, taken in conjunction with the deeper, more revealing spontaneous cases, represent a formidable challenge to all who strive to form an adequate view of the nature of the universe and in particular to those who wish to understand the profounder levels of human consciousness. We will now proceed to appraise the significance of the data and to seek for possible explanatory theories.

No point of light in an underground labyrinth
can be ignored when we are groping for a way out.

8 *Hypotheses*

Part I: PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES

What is the essential nature of the problem which is presented by the facts of precognition? It is this: How can an event which would normally be regarded as having no existence be cognized? We live our lives on the assumption that happenings occur along a line of past, present and future; that, indeed, the future is the product of past and present causes. If an event is known prior to the conditions which would normally precede such an event, what happens to the law of causality which is the basic concept of scientific advancement? Scientifically speaking, effects cannot occur except as the result of a series of past events which in various degrees are described as the causes. The kettle does not boil unless heat is applied. A car does not crash into another before it has left the garage. Nor does a man die in given circumstances before the causes of his death have occurred.

The cognizing of events out of their proper time sequence makes nonsense of science, and in particular of the law of causality. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the facts of precognition should have met with the strongest resistance and skepticism? Yet facts are facts, and it remains for us to think clearly about

them and study their implications. Obviously we must also examine the theoretical foundations of our thinking. Later I will draw some general conclusions which seem to follow the facts of precognitions, but first let us consider the phenomena themselves.

What, then, is the status of a future event when it is cognized in the present? Firstly, we note that the percipient is not cognizing the actual physical happening, but rather an impression in consciousness which subsequently is proved to correspond with a physical event. In most cases, as we have already observed, the percipient is seeing a future as it will be experienced by either his own or another's consciousness. Nevertheless, the events when they occur are physical enough and depend for their occurrence on circumstances independent of the person perceiving them. Yet it may be important to note that events do not occur in a sort of objective vacuum; that is to say, they must always be experienced by someone. The problem of precognition therefore becomes a psychological one; the event precognized and the event when actualized are both psychological.

A considerable amount has been written on the subject of precognition and attempted explanations follow fairly well-defined patterns. They may be classified as follows:

1. Theories which postulate other dimensions of Time.
2. Theories of multi-dimensional Space.
3. The concept of an "Eternal Now."
4. The doctrine of Eternal Recurrence.
5. The concept of the "Specious Present."
6. Belief that non-physical beings intervene in physical affairs and cause many of the events which are precognized.
7. Views which regard the physical world as being one of the effects, the real causes lying at a deeper level of consciousness.

I will comment briefly on each of these theories.

Time Theories

Dunne's Serial Time

It does appear at first glance that the solution of the problem of precognition might be found in the nature of Time. J. W. Dunne's pioneering book, *An Experiment with Time* (1927), has not only brought the problem of precognition prominently to the attention of a wide public but also plausibly argued the case for "Serial Time." The essence of this theory is that if Time is linear, that is to say, if Time is conceived as flowing along a line labelled past, present and future, then we need a point of reference from which to observe the flow. In other words, we need a second Time to time the first Time and so on in an infinite regress. It is obvious that if a regress is infinite it cannot have an ending, yet Dunne postulated an "observer at infinity." This of course is illogical, for as C. D. Broad has pointed out, an observer at infinity ". . . would plainly have to be the last term of a series which, by hypothesis, could have no last term" (*Proc.* Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol. XVI, p. 199).

Dunne's theory was advanced as an explanation of the phenomena of precognition. According to his theory, an event which is future in our ordinary Time might be present in another Time, say Time 2. The implication is that events do not happen; they exist, and we move up to them. Our moving up to them we call the flow of time. Although Dunne's theory has been severely criticized, chiefly because of its logical insufficiency, there are certain key ideas in Dunne's writings which I think are valuable and could be restated without his specific theory of "Serial Time." I will refer to this aspect later. I notice that although Broad expresses himself as being "wholly dissatisfied with Mr. Dunne's detailed explanation as it stands. . . . " yet he goes on to say,

"I do think that there is at least a chance of working out a satisfactory theory on his general lines" (*Proc.* Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol. XVI, p. 199).

The difficulty I encountered when, many years ago, I read *An Experiment with Time* still remains. I cannot conceive of Time as having any reality apart from events. In other words, it is the experience of succession of which we are aware. I feel, therefore, that it is an illegitimate extension of popular idiom to treat Time as an independent existent. We do in everyday language use such phrases as "events happening in time" and we speak picturesquely of "time flowing." The impression these descriptions convey is that of Time as a sort of medium in which events occur, much as a river carries its floating objects in endless sequence towards an unknown destination. Such language may create the illusion that we know Time apart from events, whereas the truth is that Time is our awareness of the sequence of events. In other words, it is our consciousness of change and becoming, and on this we base our ideas of past, present and future. From this perceptual fact of our experience we abstract our general notion of Time. So we have the concept Time, and perceptual Time. Confusion can arise if we fail to distinguish between our concepts and our perceptions. This seems to be the basic error in Dunne's theory.

C. D. Broad's Theory of Two-Dimensional Time

The two-dimensional theory of Time advanced by C. D. Broad produces on my mind the same impression as does the theory of Dunne. It is only graspable by building up a concept in terms of space. In order to surmount the apparent absurdity of supposing an event which has not happened yet somehow

exists, Broad, admittedly with some trepidation, advances a theory of a two-dimensional Time. In expounding his theory he resorts to spatial examples:

§ A point which is *east* of another point may be either *north* of, or *south* of, or in the *same latitude* as the latter. Suppose that "east of" corresponds to "later than" in the only temporal dimension that we ordinarily recognize. And suppose that there were a second temporal dimension, and that "later than" in this dimension corresponds to "north of" in the case of points on the earth's surface. Then an event which is "after" a certain other event, in the only temporal dimension which we ordinarily recognize, might be either "after" or "before" or "simultaneous with" this other event in the second temporal dimension which persons who accept a prehensive analysis of foreseeing would have to postulate" (*Proc.* Aristotelian Society, Vol. XVI, p. 200). §

It will be seen that if this concept is illustrated diagrammatically we can form a mental picture of how a future event can be imagined as being present from one point of view in the diagram while being future from another. The purely verbal description is not easy to follow and needs a diagram to assist visualization. If, for instance, north and south represent our normal line of Time, then if we are advancing in a northerly direction an event due north of our present position would be in our future. Suppose, however, that Time, instead of being regarded as a line, is conceived to have width, that is, to extend east and west. If, in this second Time, west is past and east is future, then an event north-east would be future in both dimensions, while one which is south-west would be past in both dimensions. But events north to west and south to east would be future in one dimension and past in another. I do not feel it

is worthwhile to tease one's brains unduly over this conception, but since it frequently appears in various guises it is necessary that we should note it.

For my part, however, I do not find this approach to the problem of precognition very helpful and, as I have said, such illustrative clarity as it appears to have is derived from substituting spatial imagery for temporal. This in my view disguises the nature of the problem. However, the full discussion between C. D. Broad and H. H. Price (*Proc.* Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol. XVI, pp. 177–245) is of considerable interest as a clear exposition of the problems involved in precognition. This discussion also indicates the importance attached to the subject of precognition by professional philosophers of the status of Broad and Price. In fairness, it should be mentioned that the two-dimensional theory was advanced with considerable misgiving. However, the fact of precognition, now being rather widely recognized, demands some theoretical frame and even apparently absurd theories may be better than none at all.

Space Theories

C. H. Hinton's Theory of Four-Dimensional Space

We regard space as having only three dimensions. It does not seem possible that there can be any directions other than those of length, breadth and height. By means of these coordinates we can define all points in Euclidean geometry. What then do we mean when we speak of four-dimensional space? We mean a fourth coordinate to enable us to define sets of relationships for which the three usual coordinates are inadequate. Mathematicians are familiar with calculi requiring many dimensions which are really coordinates for defining points on various

surfaces, and so on. Time also is used as a coordinate and is then referred to as a fourth dimension. However, without the aid of mathematics how can the concept of multi-dimensional space help us to understand precognition?

The idea of four-dimensional space was lucidly and plausibly argued in non-mathematical terms by C. Howard Hinton in his book *The Fourth Dimension* (1904). The concept of the fourth dimension was illustrated by many diagrams and analogies.

Plato in his "cave analogy" conceived this world to be one of shadows. The denizens of the cave lived in such conditions that they could see only the shadows of themselves and of all real objects projected onto a wall towards which their faces were turned. This shadow-world was accepted by the cave inhabitants as being the only reality. Hinton takes Plato's suggestion literally; that is to say, he regards the familiar three-dimensional world as being one of shadows when compared with the real four-dimensional world. He leads us to a conception of a four-dimensional world by means of a series of analogies illustrating the relationship which exists between lines, surfaces and solids. So, for instance, we are asked to imagine a creature confined to a plane-surface—that is to say, a creature able only to move lengthways and sideways and therefore incapable of forming a conception of the third dimension, which is height. "Think of him," says Hinton, "as of a figure cut out of paper placed on a smooth plane. Sliding over this plane, and coming into contact with other figures equally thin as he is in the third dimension, he will apprehend them only by their edges. To him they will be completely bounded by lines."

Under such a limitation, a three-dimensional object intersecting a plane surface would manifest itself only by lines. Thus, if a solid object of irregular shape were moving through a plane surface, it would appear as a series of changing lines to a creature

whose consciousness was limited to two dimensions. The lines would seem to be independent phenomena whereas in truth they would be parts of a single object. Another analogy is that of a spiral passing through a film. The intersection of the spiral through the film surface would show as a point moving in a circle. The same effect, of course, would result if the film moved and the spiral were stationary. Here also the two-dimensional being could have no concept of the spiral as a whole, but would merely perceive it as a series of points within its two-dimensional field. By means of these and other analogies we are led to the conception that three-dimensional objects are only aspects of four-dimensional ones.

P. D. Ouspensky and the Fourth Dimension

P. D. Ouspensky develops the same idea and considers that to a two-dimensional creature the third dimension would appear as motion. He assumes that animals perceive only a flat world—that is, a two-dimensional world. This is a reasonable assumption because our own vision is flat, as those whose sight has been suddenly gained in adult life have reported. Experience and the contacts of other senses eventually enable us to form the concept of three dimensions. Since, however, animals do not have the capacity to form concepts, they must accept the world as it visually appears to them, viz., flat. They have, of course, three-dimensional bodies but do not conceptually realize this. Consequently, Ouspensky argues, the third dimension appears to an animal as motion:

§ The animal can see an angle of a three-dimensional object only while moving past it and during the time it takes, the object

will seem to the animal to have turned—a new side has appeared, and the side first seen has disappeared, or moved away . . . Could the animal think about these phenomena which have not yet entered into its life (i.e., angles and curved surfaces) it would undoubtedly imagine them *in time only* . . . the angle of a house past which a horse runs every day is *a phenomenon repeating under certain circumstances, but nevertheless a phenomenon proceeding in time,* and not a spatial property of the house (*Tertium Organum,* 1922, pp. 105–106). §

Application of Four-Dimensional Space to Precognition

Four-dimensional space theories do present us with a concept of the universe in which precognition is a logical possibility. It is not a changing universe which we are asked to contemplate, but a static one. In the examples given by Hinton and others, the four-dimensional object is an unchanging reality which we, with our limited three-dimensional consciousness, see only in sections. In other words, the four-dimensional object exists *now as a totality,* but we, under the limitation of three-dimensional awareness, perceive it successively. The portions, therefore, not yet perceived are for us in the future. To use another analogy, we are, as it were, passengers in a train moving over a fixed landscape. The stations ahead of us are in *our* future, but not so for an observer on a hill who has a wide view of the landscape. He would see at a single glance many of the stations and features along the line on which the train was passing. For such an observer the stations ahead of the train, as well as the stations through which the train had passed, would be in *his* present.

If these analogies could be accepted as giving at least a probable representation of the nature of the universe, then

precognition would fit neatly into the scheme of things. The problem would then be, not how can a non-existing future be perceived, but by what means can wider areas of an existing reality be brought into our awareness. If, however, the universe is changeless and static, how can we account for the appearance of change and motion? It will be seen from the analogy given above of the horse passing the house that the time-factor only arises through the motion of the horse. Similarly in our apprehension of a four-dimensional world, the sense of time or change would be due to the psychological limitations under which we function. If, therefore, Reality is changeless, then change is illusory. That is to say, it is a subjective phenomenon of our consciousness. The landscape is not rushing past our train window, although it appears to be doing so. The explanation of a moving landscape is to be found in our motion and not in the landscape itself. Here we have a concept reminiscent of Parmenides, the Greek mathematician and philosopher. He also conceived change as unreal and advanced good reasons in support of his views. Spinoza also argued cogently for Reality as a changeless Whole. Yet nothing seems more real than our experience of change and becoming, and this in spite of the fact that when we come to think about the problem of change we find ourselves confronted with puzzling paradoxes. In a universe where everything is changing, how can anything remain the same throughout the changes? Strip away the changes and also the qualities of objects, and what do we have left to be labelled "objects"? The fact is that the concepts change and changelessness will have to be examined more carefully. At the moment we are merely concerned with the merits of the concept of a changeless Reality as a basis for understanding the problem of precognition.

As we have said, a four or more dimensional space, involving

as I think it does fundamentally a changeless Reality, does provide a promising frame for thinking about the problem of precognition, but it will require a different presentation to make it fit the actual facts of precognition. Admittedly, if future events existed like fixed objects on a landscape we would have a pictorial representation which makes precognition thinkable without straining our imaginations unduly. But is not the picture so presented oversimplified? What is worse, have we not shelved the real problem of time by treating it in terms of space? Here we will consider another conception, viz., that of an "Eternal Now," for it is a kindred idea, and fundamentally the same as the various multi-space conceptions.

The "Eternal Now"

The idea of an "Eternal Now" is an ancient and persistent one. It stems from two main sources, one religious and the other metaphysical. In the religious form it arises from the conception of God as being omnipresent and omniscient. God's omnipresence implies that all things and all beings are in Him. "In Him we live and move and have our being" is the scriptural statement of this idea. Eastern religions similarly postulate the universality of God, but not always in terms of God as a person. In Hinduism the Supreme is Brahman, the ultimate and all-embracing Reality. The concept as expressed in the *Upanishads* is profound, leading to the realization of the non-dual nature of reality. The idea of an "Eternal Now" does not necessarily correspond with religious views of God in the West, nor with those of the *Vedanta* in Hinduism. Nevertheless, theistic conceptions of both Eastern and Western religions do imply that in some sense all things exist in the eternal consciousness of the Supreme.

The metaphysical form of the doctrine appears in the concepts of the monistic philosophers. So in Hegel's Absolute we have a philosophic statement of a universal Whole which is the sum total of all phenomenal existence.

It should be mentioned that the concept of an "Eternal Now" when it is derived from either philosophical or religious sources does not necessarily involve postulating a static Reality. Yet the words "Eternal Now" convey the meaning of a state in which all phenomena are rooted in a universal Whole, which in virtue of its eternal "Nowness" is as a Whole, changeless. If this were all that was implied by an "Eternal Now" it could hardly serve as a satisfactory expression of the Supreme Ground of the universe. Metaphysically, we need much more. The Absolute must provide the explanation for the phenomena of change and freedom. However, the idea of an "Eternal Now" enjoys a wide currency and in many ways it is a more elastic concept than is that of four-dimensional space. When we come to draw our final conclusions we will endeavor to interpret the idea of an "Eternal Now" in such a way that it can be usefully employed to enable us to arrive at an understanding of precognition.

The Theory of Eternal Recurrence

This theory will sound strange to those of us in Western countries who have been nurtured in the doctrine of progress. Progress is supposed to be a continuous advance on a sort of inclined plane. Associated with this idea is that of betterment. Progress is not mere change, but change for the better. The definitions of what we mean by "better" are many and varied. Often they are contradictory and we are left with the impression that progress in an absolute sense has no meaning. On a short-

term view it is a useful term to describe our advance towards the fulfillment of our plans. In a physical sense we describe as progressive a city which removes its slums, improves the lighting of its thoroughfares and extends the range of its social services generally. Automobiles, airplanes, radios, television and the whole range of modern technological creations are cited as instances of progress. So we see around us the constant invention of new machines designed to relieve man from toil and increase the range of his satisfactions in his new-found leisure.

This process seems set in a pattern which will continue indefinitely with the goal of perfection forever eluding us. It is only when we endeavor to evaluate this changing scene and apply our labels "better" or "worse" to what is happening that our philosophical difficulties arise. Then we become aware that happiness does not follow inevitably on the gratification of our desires. In other words, we are confronted with the need to assess all physical advancement against the background of man's spiritual goals. We are now in the world of values and here the term "progress" has to be given a new meaning. This, however, is not my present point. The aspect of the idea of progress which is immediately relevant to our subject is the manner in which it is regarded in the modern world by those not philosophically inclined.

The deeply-ingrained belief is that in some sense progress is an inevitable process; that, in spite of temporary setbacks and even wars, the modern world is marching on to better things. Evolution and progress are the keywords of our generation. Does not the history of the last two hundred years or so encourage us to think in these terms? Of course, we have read of past civilizations which have vanished, and in general terms we might not deny the possibility that our own civilization might suffer the same fate as that of past civilizations. Even so, our optimistic

hearts proclaim that it will be replaced by something still better. Rightly understood and with the term "better" defined, this uncritical attitude can be supported by good reasons, depending of course on our views as to the meaning of life in general.

Now the doctrine of eternal recurrence comes as a cold douche, for according to this theory all things manifest in circles. That is to say, everything that is, has been, and will be again; and so on eternally. This sounds like nonsense, but the theory is not without its advocates, and since it appears in P. D. Ouspensky's latest book, *The Fourth Way* (1957), I comment on it.

Obviously such a theory has a direct bearing on the interpretation of the phenomena of precognition. According to such a theory, seeing the future would only be seeing a past through which we have already lived and must live again, for events move in a closed circle. As Ouspensky expounds the theory it is modified in certain important respects. Ouspensky, of course, is expounding the teachings of that extraordinary man, G. I. Gurdjieff. Although there are certain ideas in this teaching which are of considerable interest, I do not find the terminology, or conceptual frame in which it is presented, helpful. It may be an effective system for those who practice it, but its dogmatic approach is uncongenial—at least to me.

The doctrine of eternal recurrence, although not an integral part of the system, is given prominence in Ouspensky's exposition, and some of his statements seem contradictory. However, the basic idea is expressed in the following sentence:

§ What I want you to understand definitely is that as long as people are quite mechanical, things can repeat almost indefinitely" (*The Fourth Way*, p. 419). §

And then in answer to the question,

§ Does it mean that I am living the same life again? Was I reborn in 1915 and will I again be born in 1915? §

Ouspensky replies:

§ Always in 1915—that is the only thing that cannot change. And certainly we are bound to have lived before—we could not have come out of nothing . . . (*op. cit.*, pp. 422–23). §

In answer to another question he continues:

§ Life has to be repeated, there cannot be only one life. Try to understand the design of life. You cannot understand it if you think of a straight line, and if you think of circles you find that your brain cannot take it in. Everything living—organic life, people and so on—live and die, and in some mysterious way we do not understand this makes circles; these circles are connected with other circles and the whole design of life is the outcome of it. Everything, every small unit, turns and turns in its circle, because everything must go on existing (*op. cit.*, p. 426). §

In some form or other this idea of recurrence is a very old one. Usually, however, it is redeemed from its mechanical repetitive implications by some corresponding teaching of methods by which the circle of predetermined events can be broken. Ouspensky also draws a distinction between the fates of "mechanical" men, who are regarded as asleep, and self-conscious men, who are actuated by a higher principle of consciousness. The doctrine of Karma in Hinduism also implies repetition to a large extent, although here again ways of escape from the "wheel of life" are prescribed in certain disciplines.

There are questions which press for answers when considering a teaching such as that of recurrence. Firstly, we ask, what is it that recurs? Can we make sense of the doctrine if we apply it to events as we are now experiencing them? For instance, driving a car and colliding with another car which causes us to be injured, going to the hospital and becoming involved in legal proceedings. These are the kinds of cases which are precognized, and according to the theory of recurrence this sort of event has occurred before and will occur again. Such a statement seems fantastic and hardly worth thinking about. I must agree that in the form stated such is my own reaction. But we cannot leave it at that, for the facts of precognition force us to postulate some existent status for an event before it happens to us in the normal sequence of our experience. If, therefore, we are compelled by the logic of the facts to concede that a future can exist now, is it nonsense to say that it may repeat itself? Notice that I do not say repeat "in time" for in my view the problem is one of sequence and not of Time in the abstract. Consequently to me it seems nonsense to say that because a man was born in 1915 he will again be born in 1915. To say that he will be reborn in 1915 commits the error of substantializing time. 1915 does not exist in its own right *in time*. We have given a series of events the numbered label "1915" and that is all there is to it. It is not similar to a position in space to which we can return. It might make sense to say that events repeat themselves, but this is different from saying that they "repeat themselves at a certain time."

The Specious Present

This hypothesis is based on the psychological fact that what we call the present moment is not actually a moment; or, to be

more exact, it is not a point-instant without duration. In other words, the "present" has a certain length as far as our consciousness is concerned. Our awareness of events and objects even in the immediate moment of apprehension which we call the "present" is always accompanied by a sense of time passing, which is duration. A "present" without duration would be a mathematical abstraction, as are points, lines and so on. It was the English psychical researcher H. F. Saltmarsh who first worked out a theory of precognition based on the psychological fact of a "Specious Present." He frankly states in his book *Foreknowledge* (1938) that he is not "in love" with his hypothesis (p. 94). Nevertheless, I feel that when it is considered together with the general view which I shall later express, it represents the perceptive aspect of precognition.

Briefly, the theory is this: If in a given moment of perception there is a certain duration, then if in some cases this duration period were extended, it would embrace more events. Anyone experiencing this expanded "Specious Present" would, compared to another person whose "Specious Present" was normal, see both past and future events as though they were present. Saltmarsh works out this theory with a few examples. However, I will give an analogy of my own which I think makes the theory clear and at the same time exposes its weakness as an explanation.

Let us suppose that our consciousness is a spotlight which is focused on what we call the "present moment." Within this present moment there are, let us say, three events, *B*, *C*, and *D*. These three events, we will assume, are perceived simultaneously by the average person. Suppose, however, that the spotlight of another person's consciousness within his immediate present embraced a longer train of events, *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, and *E;* it is clear that for the first observer, event *A* is something which happened in his past and *E* is an event which has not yet occurred; that is,

it is in his future. For the second observer, however, whose specious present embraced the longer series of events, all the events *A, B, C, D,* and *E* would be in his present. Therefore an observer perceiving event *E* would from the point of view of the first observer have experienced precognition.

In dealing with precognition over long periods of time we would have to postulate that there are some people whose specious present is wide enough to span these periods of time; indeed, we might be led to the belief that the consciousness of God is that of an "Everlasting Now"—that indeed would be the meaning of His Omniscience. So in varying degrees for other beings the spotlight of consciousness may be more or less extensive, with corresponding capacities for comprehending wider sweeps of events.

We have to make one other assumption, namely, that this wider awareness is a natural function of our subliminal consciousness, and that it is from this aspect of our nature that information infiltrates to our brain, which is the point where the spotlight is most limited.

While this theory may give a clue as to how the experience of precognition occurs as a psychological fact, it leaves the essential problem untouched. Merely to say that our subliminal specious present embraces a long period of duration and so, *ex hypothesis,* has the capacity to perceive events as simultaneous which are in the future for our ordinary consciousness, leaves us still without any understanding regarding the nature of the events themselves.

Consider the events which are precognized: illnesses, accidents, deaths, trivial incidents, wars, natural catastrophes, etc. What, we again ask, is the status of such events at the time they are precognized? Admittedly, if we could conceive them existing as unchangeable features of Reality which we approach

sequentially with our limited consciousness, then it might make sense to say that they were embraced within the wider range of our subliminal awareness. However, before such a concept can have any meaning for us, we shall have to arrive at a clearer conception of the kind of existence these events have *at the time they are precognized.* This we will endeavor to do in a later chapter. It will be observed that the attempt to "explain" precognition by means of an expanded "Specious Present" implies fundamentally the same general view as that of an "Eternal Now," which we have already considered.

A seed hidden in the darkness of the soil holds within it the mystery of a plant's growth.

9 *Hypotheses*

Part II: INTERVENTION AND SUBLIMINAL CAUSATION

The theories which we shall consider in this chapter would, if acceptable, involve the minimum disturbance of our ordinary way of viewing things. We shall, however, have to postulate the existence of non-physical beings, and probably telepathic influence from living persons.

If these assumptions be conceded, then we do avoid the necessity of adopting topsy-turvy notions of time, space and causation. However, we must not expect to find a solution to the stubborn problem of precognition along the straight path of common-sense thinking. Sooner or later, as we study the facts of psychical phenomena, the realization is forced upon us that the universe is not as it appears to our normal sense-life to be.

It is not only the study of psi phenomena which disturbs our common-sense views. Our sense-impressions cannot be accepted at their face value; hence the long history of philosophic discussion as to the nature of reality. This discussion would be without any meaning if reality were precisely as our senses report it to be. Nothing would seem to be more obvious than that we live in a world of external objects which have qualities of color,

taste, smell, hardness, softness and so on. But it turns out on examination that these qualities have no independent existence apart from our minds.

The truth is that we have to bring our reason to bear on the nature of the world and cannot naively take our sense-impressions for granted. So much is this the case that we do not even have complete certainty that there is an independent objective world. In my other books I have discussed these problems which exist for philosophy. However, it is necessary that we should keep in mind that the sensory world is not the ultimate reality, but is only an aspect of a wider whole.

Non-physical Beings

When we refer to non-physical beings we naturally think first of human beings who are presumed to have passed into another world. In my previous books I have reviewed the evidence for survival of bodily death and also considered the general background from which we can logically expect survival to be a fact. We will return to this subject in a later chapter when we consider what type of universe it would be if psi phenomena could be *expected* to occur, rather than be the anomalies that they now appear to be. At this point, let us assume that people do survive what we call death, and that under certain circumstances they can influence the course of events in the lives of those still in this world. If we grant the non-physical existence of human beings, it would be a short step to assuming that more advanced "spirits" exist with greater powers of intervening in our affairs than have human "spirits."

Do the above assumptions provide us with a basis for understanding precognition? I think that some cases could reasonably

be interpreted along these lines, but not all. In fact, merely to say that the "spirits" know the future is only to push the real problem of precognition further back. If they do know the future, how do they know it? If the answer is that for "spirits" time does not exist and that they see events as present which for us are in the future, then we repeat our query, What is the status of the events when "spirits" see them in *their* present? So we are back where we started, and postulating the existence of "spirits" has not helped us to understand the problem of precognition. As we have already seen from the cases cited, people who have precognitive experiences do not have them for the most part as the result of communication from the deceased. The precognition usually occurs spontaneously and often is concerned with trivial incidents which would hardly seem worthy of the intervention of any non-physical being.

But there is one possibility to which we should refer. If we could imagine some pattern of Cosmic unfolding as existing—say, God's plan for the world—then we might suppose that some "spirits" could have access to this plan, or at least to some portion of it, and it might then be conceivable that on occasion "spirits" could communicate to us what they had apprehended. I do not at this stage press this view, for stated thus baldly it would seem to involve too many assumptions. We will look at the idea later when we have to come to grips with the problem of the status of precognized events.

Apart from the above possibility, there is another which could involve the intervention of disembodied entities. It could be contended, and indeed has been, that the deceased actually influence and bring about many of the events which are precognized. If such were the case, then obviously some of the most baffling features of precognition would not exist; in fact, what one might call "normal" causative factors would then be

operative. The events precognized would not have any existence at the time they were foreseen; they would merely be previews of events which were in the process of being caused by "spirits." There would be no difference in principle between causation due to disembodied entities and the familiar processes which occur when one individual influences another to perform some action.

We need not even postulate "spirits" as causative factors: if telepathy is a fact (and this I believe to have been demonstrated), then we can suppose that telepathic influence may be at work in causing some events to occur. I see no reason to dispute this, and if such influence is operative then we may expect that occasionally these telepathic influences may become translated into visions, premonitions and definite precognitions. I am prepared to accept that some precognitions, but not all, are of this type.

It would be absurd to invoke either the intervention of "spirits" or the operation of telepathy on the part of the living as an explanation of instances such as the foreseeing of the breaking of the vase, the injury to the left hind leg of the cocker spaniel, the accident to the buggy and the automobile accident as described in Cases 24, 27, 31 and 43. Still more fantastic would it be to suppose that the successful guessing of pictures ahead of their exposure, or even of their having been drawn, as in Whately Carington's experiments (Chapter 7), could be due to telepathy in any sense in which the word telepathy is commonly used.

Subliminal Causation

This view is based on the assumption that the external world of common experience is one of effects, and that the real causes of phenomena lie at some deeper level of consciousness. It is

now almost commonplace to regard man not so much as a rational being, but as more often a rationalizing one. So we accept that much of our behavior is caused by subconscious impulses for which our surface rational consciousness invents reasons. Modern psychology has probed below the surface of our rational self and has uncovered the subconscious or subliminal regions of man's psychological make-up. This in effect means that much of our behaviour, which formerly we would unhesitatingly have regarded as being due to our rational judgment is proved not to be so in fact. The subconscious is pressing, infiltrating and occasionally upheaving into the crust of consciousness which we call rational normality.

Although we are now accustomed to this view of our psychological constitution, it represents a revolution in our thinking about the human psyche which has in the West taken place during a comparatively short period, say since Freud, Jung and Adler. In the East, however, there is a long tradition which regards man as having many levels of consciousness and it is on this conception that various systems of discipline are based. What is involved in these ideas of subconscious activation? It is this: *There exists a subliminal realm of causation and our outer consciousness is to a large extent one of effects.*

Without probing more deeply the current views in the West regarding the subconscious, we may be able to draw some conclusions which could help us to understand the problem of precognition. Let us take a simple example of subconscious motivation which could be interpreted as precognition: Suppose a man were hypnotized, and while in hypnotic trance was given a post-hypnotic suggestion that when he awakened he would have a stiff neck which would continue until he was shown a piece of paper marked by a cross—a not unusual type of hypnotic experiment. On awakening, the man would not remember what

had been said to him, and would go about his business in the normal way, except, of course, that he would have a stiff neck. Now assume that, while still inconvenienced by the stiff neck, the man visited a sensitive who told him that he would meet a person who would show him a piece of paper which would be important to him. When later he was shown the cross-marked paper and his stiff neck was cured, he could legitimately consider that the sensitive had foreseen an event in his future—as indeed had been the case, although the whole sequence was the inevitable outcome of the idea planted in his subconscious, but of which he was ignorant in his waking state.

Many precognitions could be of this nature. That is to say, events are often cognized on the subliminal level before they manifest in the external world. There is evidence that sensitives establish a rapport with a person's deeper level of consciousness and can, as we say, "read his thoughts." But they can do more than this: they can establish a contact with a person's mysterious hidden being which, figuratively speaking, would seem to be a womb in which events are born and sometimes destined to manifest. This might be one interpretation of Osty's generalization that "Every human being knows his entire life. . . . "

If precognition could be interpreted according to what I have called in *The Expansion of Awareness* (1955) a theory of "subconscious latency," then we would be well on the way to breaking the hard kernel of the problem. We would, for instance, not so palpably offend against the law of causation as would be the case if we adopted some of the other theories which we have considered.

The position would be somewhat as follows: an event X has been precognized and the fulfillment is event Y. *Ex hypothesis* this event X has not yet occurred in our normal sequence. And what is more, according to the law of causality this event X

cannot occur until certain other events have taken place, these events being regarded as the causes of X. But the event X *has* in some sense occurred; otherwise a person could not have become aware of it. So we have the following alternatives from which to choose: (1) The precognizing of event X caused it to happen, an untenable theory in most cases. (2) That causality was operating in reverse, that is, from the future to the present. This implies that the future was exerting some influence to cause it to become present in the consciousness of a person; to our ordinary way of thinking this is nonsense. (3) We can adopt the theory that the chain of causation is, metaphorically speaking, vertical, and not along the line of horizontal sequence as we normally imagine.

This last theory is the one I have called "subconscious latency" and it implies that the causes of events lie in the subliminal. The assumption is that X, the event precognized, and Y, the fulfillment, are not related causally on the horizontal plane, but are the effects of a causal ancestor, Z. That is, Z is an event on the subliminal level. This view I believe to be substantially the correct one. Admittedly, it still presents us with some awkward problems, but not so awkward as those of the other theories. However, before it can appear reasonable we shall have to examine more deeply some background views regarding the nature of the universe.

An explanation, like a suit, needs to be tailored; for our minds have shapes as well as our bodies.

10 *Which Hypothesis Shall We Choose?*

The hypothesis which will commend itself to us will largely be influenced by our background philosophy. Fewer difficulties are encountered in coming to grips with precognition if we are prepared to accept the universe as a living Whole; that, in fact, there is nothing dead in it. Those who regard matter as an instance of deadness are outmoded in their thinking. About a hundred years ago the fashion of thought in the then dawning scientific age was to regard matter as a sort of fundamental substance out of which all that exists had arisen, including ourselves. Of course, it was difficult to account for the origin of life out of the assumed deadness of matter. However, the scientist, as a scientist, is inclined to be naive in his thinking, and approaches his problems with an empirical acceptance of the world as it appears to his senses.

The Existence of Matter

And is it not clear that existing "out there" is an independent world of material things which can be measured and analyzed?

Clear enough to the scientist, but not to the philosopher. Matter is an abstraction and is unknown in the direct sense we think it exists. To say that we have sense-experience and to say that we know "matter" or physical objects are two very different statements. The first statement is true, but the second one is an assumption based on a belief that our senses are reporting about a supposed reality behind our sense-impressions. To put it another way, matter is an idea representing a theory to account for sense-data. Keeping strictly to the facts, however, our direct acquaintance is of sense-data, i.e., sensations of color, taste, smell and so on. We enter into the realm of theory when we go further and postulate "matter" as the cause of these.

Still more must we be on our guard when those who theorize declare that this abstraction called matter is dead. How do they know it is when they have no direct contact with it? Rocks and minerals are not instances of dead matter. They are the names for certain groups of sense-data. The same sense-data could just as well be caused if the rocks were living; indeed, we might have the same sensations without any external objects, as we do in dreams or under the influence of hypnotic suggestion. Our practical life is based on the supposition that there is an external universe, but there is no absolute proof that such is the case, at least so the solipsists would argue. It is therefore an assumption to postulate that behind our sense-data there is a substance called matter; and to declare further that this unknown substance is dead is to add a flight of fancy to the original assumption.

Life in a Dead Universe

Indeed to do so creates an insoluble problem. How can life have arisen in a dead universe? And having arisen, how can we conceive any relationship between matter, conceived as dead,

and life? However, the problem is an artificial one of our own creation. There was never any need to suppose the existence of dead matter, and in the light of modern knowledge of the atom such an idea hardly has any meaning, for the atom certainly does not exhibit deadness.

If we confine ourselves to what we know directly, and proceed with our reasoning on this basis, we arrive at entirely opposite conclusions from those of the dogmatic materialists of the last century. The first datum of our awareness is of ourselves as conscious beings. All the theories concerning the universe are those of living men. We know that we are living, thinking beings, and it is logical to suppose that our existence is rooted in a living background. Such a supposition at least makes sense, whereas the opposite does not. Thus we are proceeding from the known to the unknown and consequently are warranted in concluding that our livingness is the product of livingness. This conclusion is important in connection with the problem of our relationship to our own bodies.

Does this conception of the universe afford any help for an understanding of the problem of precognition? I think it does, because it implies that the physical universe is a product of mind, and that all objects and events are psychological expressions.

The Nature of Perception

A few remarks on the nature of perception will reinforce what we have said regarding matter. There are many theories of perception, but two main schools of thought have dominated philosophical thinking. Broadly speaking, they are those of the Realists and of the Idealists.

The realists contend that our senses bring us into contact with an outside world. According to this view, the objects we perceive

possess color, shape, smell, taste and, when suitably activated, produce sound. In other words, our senses are windows, as it were, on a real world to which we have direct access.

The idealist position, on the other hand, is that we do not know the external world directly. Our immediate awareness is of the ideas in our minds. The apparent external world is an inference based on our direct acquaintance with our own mental states.

Analysis of Naive Realism

Realism and idealism represent two extreme points of view. The first one is that of common sense and largely is the one scientists take for granted. However, it cannot be accepted. To say that the senses report accurately about an outside world is tantamount to saying that we know an outside world apart from our senses and so can compare what our senses report with the outside world itself. This sets up an unwarranted duality, viz., the world of sense-impressions and another world, supposedly the source of our sense-impressions. How can we know such a world apart from our senses? In any case, which sensory world are we to choose as the real one? The reports which our senses bring us at different times even about what we regard as simple objects differ considerably. We may change our position in relation to a table and see it as square, or slightly elongated, or perhaps only see one side of it. Also its color will vary according to differing lights. Then again, our senses may, as we say, play tricks with us, especially if we have been taking drugs, such as mescalin, or if we place santonin in our eyes.

We may, of course, appeal to a majority judgment and say that such and such is the normal sense-impression. But which of the normal sense-impressions are we going to select for the privilege

of being regarded as the true expression of the external world? In other words, which of the various tables perceived by the so-called normal person is the "real" one? The one seen from, say, ten yards away with the light shining from the east? Or the one observed from four feet in the western light of the evening? Then again, what is the surface of the table like? Smooth, rough, or uneven? To a man whose hands are used to hard manual labor the table may appear to be smooth, but to a blind man whose hands have been trained to become sensitive, the surface may seem to be rough. In any case, according to the physicist the senses must be giving us a misleading impression of the table because it is not the solid object it appears to be, and the resistance we feel when we press on it is due to electrical repulsion between the atoms of our fingers and those of the table. And so we could continue to analyze our judgments of size, showing that size is relative and not an absolute quality of so-called objects. Thus it would appear that we are imprisoned within the circle of our sense-impressions and there seems to be no way of coming to a direct acquaintance with the world which common sense has always insisted existed independently of our perceptions.

The Idealist Position

Are we then driven to accept the second alternative, that of idealism? This view in its extreme form is called subjective idealism, idealism, of course, having no connection with idealism in a moral or ethical sense. All that idealism asserts is that in the final analysis we only know our own ideas. This being the case, we ask: is there nothing which can be postulated to account for the ideas or sense-data?

As is well-known, the idealist doctrine in its extreme form

states that the very existence of an object consists in its being perceived. This view logically ends in solipsism, which is the doctrine that nothing exists apart from our own perceptions; but few philosophers, I think, would maintain the solipsistic view even if, as some think, this view is logically irrefutable.

Even if we grant that objects are the products of perception, they need not be the products of *our* perceptions. Berkeley and other idealist philosophers have postulated God or a universal Mind as the Eternal Perceiver which sustains the world of objects. In this way the idealists become objective idealists; that is to say, they believe there is a world which exists independently of our personal perceptions.

It is not part of our purpose to examine in any detail the arguments which sustain the various idealistic views, but it is relevant that we should keep in mind that on both the idealistic and realistic conceptions the apparently external world cannot be naively accepted as reported by the senses.

Even on the modern realistic view, we only know sense-data, and physical objects are merely postulated as a reasonable way of explaining the coordination and permanence of sense-data. However, my present point is that even if we need to retain the so-called physical object as a logical postulate, it would not be something composed of "dead matter"; rather, it would be an organism. Let us now approach this problem of perception by coming to closer grips with a precognition of an event.

What is an Event?

In our final conclusion we shall have to give some account as to *why* events occur, but here we are considering *how* they occur. The simplest instances of precognition are often the most difficult to understand. Let us therefore take a very "simple" case,

that of the woman who precognized an injury to the left hind leg of her dog (Case 27). Here we have two events:

(1) The prevision of the dog "limping badly, the *left hind leg* being carried."

(2) Three weeks later "our pup was knocked down by a small truck and broke his *left hind leg.*"

It is assumed that there is enough correspondence between these two events to enable us to conclude that they are connected in some way. The first of these events is clearly psychological, whereas the second would usually be regarded as physical. The problem is, what is the nature of the link between the two events, one psychological and the other physical?

But *is* one event psychological and the other physical? In any case, what do we mean by physical? Both events are experiences in the mind of a person; that is to say, sense-data are perceived in both cases. It may be said that in the first instance the experience is purely subjective. But is this a correct statement of the experience? We have seen that we cannot know physical objects directly, but that our immediate acquaintance is with sense-data. But does this imply that sense-data are purely subjective; that is to say, that there is no duality of knower and known, of subject and object? It does not. To be aware is to be aware of something. This implies that sense-data have existence apart from the cognizing consciousness.

This being the case, what is the difference between cognizing the sense-data comprizing the "picture" which flashed into the mind of Mrs. B. N., and the corresponding sense-data of the physical event three weeks later, when the dog was seen to be limping with his left leg broken? Both events are psychologically of the same status, yet we regard the physical event as having a greater degree of reality than the prevision. The reason is that the physical event, while being the same as regards the sense-

data, has the added quality of being a public event; that is to say, it can be observed by many people and therefore is deemed to have a greater degree of objectivity or, as we say, actuality.

Does this element of collective perception of sense-data confer any more reality on the physical event than the same sense-data possess when presented in a vision? Philosophically speaking, I cannot see that it does, but for the purpose of practical living it obviously does. It is a process of "becoming" which we are witnessing when an event emerges out of the private world of a single individual and becomes a public event. Figuratively speaking, a kind of "materialization" has occurred. It is difficult to say precisely what is meant by the word "materialization." It conveys the impression that sense-data can condense, as it were, like a cloud of steam! Yet, in homely parlance, something like this could occur.

Let us look at it like this: suppose that a drunkard saw pink elephants; we would say that he was suffering from an hallucination. But the drunkard would not agree. To him the pink elephants are real, objective creatures; he sees them, and is greatly distressed by the sight of them. The pink elephants are undoubtedly sense-data. We who are not drunk consider it ridiculous to ascribe the experience of these particular sense-data to the existence of pink elephants, although uncritically we *do* ascribe our other sense-data to the existence of a world of objects.

We will now make the further supposition that, instead of the pink elephants being merely part of the drunkard's private world, other people also saw them. This is not so improbable as it may seem, for there are many cases of what we call collective apparitions. We could suppose that by some telepathic process a number of people began to see pink elephants, even as it is supposed many people see the "Indian rope trick." What happens then to our common-sense criterion that reality is conferred on

an event by the fact of it becoming an object of public perception? The truth seems to be that while for purposes of practical living widespread public perception of an event is accepted as a sign of its reality, this principle has no intrinsic validity.

This short digression on the nature of perception will serve to show that in cases of precognition we are dealing with two events of a psychological nature. That the physical fulfillment of the precognition is of the same essential nature as the precognition itself. Let us now return to the consideration of the case of the injured dog (27).

We cannot say that the prevision three weeks ahead of the physical event was its "cause." At the time of the prevision, the truck which three weeks later was to knock down the dog had not come into contact with it, and the dog's leg was sound and normal. Yet in the prevision the dog was limping! What is the answer to the problem?

I suggest we should regard the prevision and the actuality as one event at different stages of unfoldment. When Mrs. B. N. had the prevision, the dog's leg *was* injured in what I tentatively call the *subliminal counterpart* of the dog, and the physical event which followed three weeks later was a projection of an event which already had occurred—that is to say, the injury was part of the pattern of the dog's manifestation. We will later endeavor to define what we mean by "pattern." Mrs. B. N. did not see in her prevision all the circumstances of the dog's injury, but we can assume, if our theory is correct, that the details were there, although not recollected.

Some Assumptions

What assumptions are involved in such a theory as the above? One is that events occur within the hidden reaches of conscious-

ness before they actualize physically. Is there anything inherently absurd in this view? I do not think so, because in a way all physical phenomena are projections of psychological pre-conditions. This is particularly evidenced in technological creations. A house exists as an idea before it manifests in terms of brick and mortar. The building of a house is a complex of many factors, each contributing to the construction of it, but fundamentally it is held together by an idea, and this idea has a prior existence in consciousness. Does this concept reduce the outer world of physical happenings to a sort of reflection of images which exist at a deeper level of consciousness? Fundamentally it does, although the concreteness on the outer rim of conditions is a necessary factor in manifestation. However, the general pattern of manifestation is from within outwards. The tree exists in the seed; an animal is latent in the hereditary factors, and even a whole civilization may be conceived to exist in the minds of a generation. So from the unmanifested and invisible emerge the events into the periphery of our sense-life; thus from the hidden womb of life is disclosed part of its infinite possibilities.

The Choice of a Theory

It will be observed that all the theories we have reviewed in this volume require that we desert to a considerable extent our normal common-sense view of existence. Although the various theories differ in important respects, there is one assumption common to them all. They all imply the existence of a subliminal level of awareness with its own characteristic mode of functioning. If, for instance, we adopt one of the Space or Time theories we shall also have to suppose aspects of consciousness in which comprehension of these additional dimensions of space and time

are possible. In other words we are asked to contemplate a reach of the mind far beyond our normal sensory capacity, and one which implies a non-physical existence, inasmuch as it transcends normal brain-functioning.

This assumption is still more in evidence if we adopt one of the theories reviewed in Chapter 9. In fact, whichever way we turn in our search for a theory of precognition (and other forms of psi phenomena), we find ourselves compelled to postulate modes of consciousness beyond the limits of those restricted to the brain. It would seem that the brain can receive the results of the working of deeper conscious levels, *but of itself* it has no means of obtaining the information in cases of precognition, and indeed in psi cases generally.

Obviously, as our brain is limited to sensory contacts in its functioning, then if information is obtained in cases where no sensory contact is possible, as in telepathy and particularly so with precognition, are we not compelled to conclude that the brain is not our only organ of knowing? In other words, that we have a non-physical mode of consciousness?

I have in my other books presented the evidence which supports this conclusion and there is also a growing number of investigators who find the evidence derived from a consideration of paranormal phenomena leads to the same conclusion. When, therefore, we adopt the conception of a subliminal region of consciousness as being probably the most promising for the understanding of precognition, we are choosing one that is already implied in other fields of research. But of course the term subliminal is variously defined, and on this point we shall have something more to say.

While in general terms such a view may be reasonably interpretative of what is happening, yet the application of it to specific cases of precognition raises its own crop of difficulties. In

particular, we ask what is the form of existence of events in the subliminal consciousness? Also, if we know something of how events materialize from their hidden sources, why should they manifest in the forms they do? The answer to these questions will necessitate a clarification of the term "subliminal."

The body limits consciousness;
it does not create it.

11 *The Subliminal Consciousness and Out of the Body Experiences*

Definition of Subliminal

The word subliminal means "below the threshold." It is a coined word, derived from the preposition *sub,* meaning under, and *limen,* the equivalent to threshold. When therefore we refer to a subliminal consciousness we mean that aspect of the human psyche which exists under the normal threshold of sensory awareness.

For our purpose such a generalized definition is inadequate, for the simple reason that so many different capacities are attributed to the subliminal region of our being. For instance, what we believe to be the powers and potentialities of our subliminal consciousness will be largely determined by the means we adopt to explore this aspect of ourselves.

The psychoanalyst for his special purposes will uncover the complexes and repressions. He will describe the subconscious largely in terms of psychic maladjustment. Jungian psychologists, on the other hand, approach the human psyche from a different angle, and stress the importance of a collective un-

conscious. So the various psychological techniques apply their methods and build up their respective pictures of the subliminal regions of man's nature.

Diversity of Subliminal Characteristics

When we come to consider the great diversity of characteristics which are attributed to man's subliminal consciousness, it becomes clear that we are dealing with a psychic realm of considerable complexity for which we, at least in the West, have no adequate terms.

From this region comes the inspiration of genius and mystical experience, also those paranormal powers for which we use the galaxy of terms, telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and so on, now described as psi phenomena. Obviously then, the one term, subliminal consciousness, covers too much ground, and becomes virtually a noncommittal term which tells us nothing specific except that consciousness *is* functioning below the threshold of the ordinary waking state. Psychoanalysis, of course, has gone some way in mapping out, as it were, the subliminal aspects of consciousness. But its achievement has been limited and specialized. For the most part the persons who submit themselves to analysis are "sick souls"; therefore the techniques employed are designed to the practical end of relieving the disturbances manifesting at the conscious level. Although we have to be grateful that Freud and others have demonstrated to people in Western countries that man has levels of conscious functioning below the threshold of the waking state, yet what has been revealed by the method of psychoanalysis could be very misleading if taken to represent the whole content of our deeper level.

Eastern Techniques

We are now becoming fairly familiar with the fact that in the East man is regarded as functioning on various levels of consciousness. When I say the "East" I speak particularly of India, and the various techniques associated with the meditative practices of Hinduism. It is not my purpose to discuss in detail the Yoga system of *Patanjali,* nor the different schools of Hindu philosophy. However, it is relevant to point out that Sanskrit terms are available to describe many subtle aspects of consciousness which represent the direct experiences of Indian mystics and occultists. If these terms mean nothing to us, it is only because we have not had the experiences which lie behind the words, even as the word "supersonic" would have no meaning for a primitive man in central Africa.

We must at this stage draw attention to the cleavage in point of view between those in the East who have concentrated their main energies towards introspective exploration and those in the West whose energies have been directed outwards. A much deeper view of man is taken in the East. He is regarded as a spirit, fundamentally an aspect of the Universal Brahman. Man in his individualized manifestation has existence on many non-physical levels. On each of these levels, or *Lokas,* he has appropriate bodies, or *Upadhis.* These *Upadhis* are only brought into existence to enable the *Jivatma*—individual soul—to experience these worlds in accordance with its desires. It is the *Jivatma's* own desire which is the cause of its embodiment on each plane of existence.

It will be seen that on such a view, the single term "subliminal" lacks subtlety as a description of man's inner consciousness. The facts of psi phenomena are bringing many in the West

nearer to some of the conceptions regarding Man which have prevailed in the East for thousands of years.

Out of the Body Experiences and the Phenomena of Bi-location

It may seem incredible to some that we can have any conscious existence apart from that on the physical level. Those who take this view will naturally regard Eastern concepts as being based on sheer imagination. However, we have records of people in the West who have had just those experiences which can most reasonably be interpreted as being what they purport to be, viz., conscious existence "out of the body." Such experiences are strong corroboration of the Eastern view that man has several vehicles or bodies. Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington in their book *The Phenomena of Astral Projection* (1951) refer to over a hundred cases. They all have the peculiar characteristic of definite self-consciousness "out of the body." In most cases the physical body is seen from without, while the person is fully conscious in some other body.

It is emphasized that this is not just a dream. The experience is unique, definite and beyond the need for proof. Those who have it can only say, "*Experience it; then you will know.*" Sometimes the person is able to manifest to others in his projected body. On one occasion I myself had the curious experience of seeing a duplicate of my own body. The form seemed real and objective.

On other occasions my wife has seen what I can only call my "double." I mention these incidents *en passant* because they are not, strictly speaking, what are called "out of the body" experi-

ences, although they support the Eastern tradition that we have other vehicles of consciousness. In the cases where my wife saw both my physical body and my subtle counterpart *at the same time,* we have examples of bi-location.

It is difficult to estimate how common these out of the body experiences are. They crop up with some people most unexpectedly. For instance, William Gerhardi's novel *Resurrection* centers upon his own experience of "seeing" his physical body on the bed while he was self-conscious in another body. I have friends to whom this experience is not unusual. For example, my friend M. K. writes as follows:

§ I found myself separated from my body on the bed, and I was now standing three or four feet away . . . It was then I thought, Here I am, in a body in which I may go traveling . . . I am new yet in this body, but I shall leave my room in which I am standing, and try to get to my studio. To do this I shall need to go over to the door, across the stair-landing and get through the other door into my studio. Then I tried to walk, only to find walking impossible as my feet left the floor with the buoyancy of one "treading" salt water, so that I floated parallel with the ceiling, and came to my studio. After this, I had the experience of returning by the same way and manner into my room, and into my body lying there on the bed. §

In the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research (Vol. L, 1955) will be found an interesting account of the personal out of the body experiences of Dr. J. H. M. Whiteman. He states: "As far as my own records are concerned the experiences classified *full separation* number about 550." Dr. Whiteman's remarks on the distinction between dreams and true *separation* experi-

ences are most illuminating, coming as they do from a man who has first-hand acquaintance with the experiences, and also the competence to analyze what he has experienced. He has no doubt that when out of the body, he is in a world where:

§ (A) The objects of perception, understanding and feeling are organized in such a way as to constitute phenomena of a "world" that is not physical;

(B) The human (or other) form in which these faculties seem to be placed is also situated in that "world." §

In connection with one of his experiences he remarks, "The thought that was then borne in upon me with inescapable conviction was this: 'I have never been awake before.'"

The ordinary dream state is quite different from an "out of the body" experience. In dreams the ordinary person has little reflective power and the dream images proceed irrationally. In other words, the ordinary dream experience is one in which we are not self-conscious. I am ignoring the experiences of those people who are occasionally self-conscious in their dreams. When dreams do assume this quality of self-consciousness we may suppose they cease to be dreams in the ordinary sense of the word.

Perhaps I should here interpolate that while the *actual experience of separation* may be the same with all who have had it, yet the effect on the consciousness of different people *after* they have separated differs considerably. For instance, Dr. Whiteman had certain mystical experiences, while other people when out of the body find themselves confined to phenomena of a comparatively mundane type.

We shall have occasion to refer to this aspect in our general summing up. My immediate purpose is to show that the Eastern teaching regarding other planes of existence is supported by the

experiences of many people in the West. Indeed, many who have had out of the body experiences, such as Sylvan Muldoon, have been completely ignorant regarding the tradition in the East, yet their accounts parallel those which can be found in India and other countries where certain rituals are practiced.

Each one of us may be haunted; not by "spirits"
but by the forms of our own thinking.

12 *Thought-Forms*

We draw attention to another Eastern concept regarding the *Lokas,* or planes of existence. On these planes, thoughts are conceived to take objective forms. Clairvoyants claim to "see" thoughts as forms. What we are asked to visualize is a sort of "psychic atmosphere" in which thoughts have embodiment; that is, they can exist independently of the minds which created them. It reminds us of the views of the objective idealists who postulate the independent existence of sense data.

The question may be asked: If images have an independent existence, what are they made of? Such a question is based on the unexpressed supposition that the reality of things is due to the material or substance of which they are composed. The question would not arise if we realized that the primary reality is the experience itself, and this is psychological. For our purposes all we need to ask is whether the images are subjective or objective, and by this we mean, are they purely products of *our* minds, or do they exist apart from ourselves?

Professor H. H. Price, in a paper entitled "Survival and the Idea of 'Another World,'" draws a distinction between *imagin-*

ing and *imaging*. The first term is usually supposed to relate to objects and situations which we know are unreal. Imaging however, is the creating of images, and Price is expounding the reality of "an *imagy* world, but not on that account an imaginary one." He contends that there is nothing logically absurd in the hypothesis "that memories, desires and images can exist in the absence of a physical brain" (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. L, 1953, p. 18).

We have here a modern exposition of an Eastern concept. Indeed, Price compares the idea of an after-death world of mental images with the terminology of the Hindu thinkers regarding *Kama Loka*, which is the plane on which desires express themselves in objective forms.

The mechanism of image-making seems to be operative in cases of self-created apparitions, which become objects of collective perception. A dramatic example of a thought-created phantom is that related by Madame Alexandra David-Neel, where she herself after some months of concentration and the performance of certain rites, created the form of a monk. This form became fixed and life-like and later seemed to have an independent life of its own. It was at one time seen by another person. Eventually the hallucination proved to be disturbing, and efforts had to be made to dissolve it. This was only achieved as the result of a long period of concentration (*Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, 1932, pp. 314–315).

The above account is in accord with a wide-spread tradition in the East—particularly in Tibet—that certain persons are able to create phantom forms, called *tulpas* in Tibet. Occultists also teach that phantom forms may by concentration be brought into existence. It is claimed that once the form has been created, it can continue to exist in a semi-automatic manner, and even be "ensouled" by elemental forms of life, sometimes called nature spirits. It is not our purpose to examine these claims in detail,

but it is relevant to keep them in mind as part of the general tradition which supports the objectivity of "thought-forms."

The records of psychical research contain many accounts of apparitions seen collectively and it would seem that although they originate psychically, they may have some independent status, but not necessarily physical. Numerous examples of phantasmal appearances could be given, many of which require that we postulate their existential independence. Telepathy is usually invoked to account for the collective aspect of these phenomena, but since we know very little about the processes of telepathy, the use of this concept hardly explains anything; and for all we know, telepathy itself may involve the perception of thought-forms.

It is interesting to note that "A E" (George Russell), the Irish poet and writer, has suggested that imaginations may in some way embody themselves. He makes this suggestion in an attempt to explain his own experiences. He finds that the figures in scenes which he imagines assume almost objective reality and, what is more, he has only to wish that such figures should make some alteration in position, and they do so without his picturing in advance what the new situation will be (*The Candle of Vision*, 1918, pp. 107–108). I have on occasion wondered whether some of my own hypnagogic images might not have an independent existence. They often have a degree of vividness beyond my normal power of visualization.

Further Indications of a Collective World of Images

There is the suggestion of a collective world of images in one of Dr. Whiteman's "out of the body" experiences. He "saw a palace or temple of superb beauty and vast proportions . . . "

He describes this structure in some detail. Then he makes the following comment:

§ But presently intellectual wondering took me within the seeing, to ask of interior causes. And for a few moments, in a more purely intellectual state, it was imparted to me (or so I understood it) that this entire manifestation sprang from a perfect kind of memory—not in any way my own memory, but the joint memory of many human beings, worked out and fulfilled over a very great period of time, so as to be part of the basis of their joint life (*Proc.* S.P.R. Vol. L, 1953, p. 251). §

Whatever views one may take regarding an experience such as the above, I do draw attention to the fact that collective images of this type are accepted as realities in the Eastern tradition. Also, some such conception seems to be necessary in order to account for the retrocognitive experiences of Miss E. F. Jourdain and Miss C. A. E. Moberly, related in *An Adventure* (first ed., 1911) where they saw persons and scenery in the Trianon gardens which in fact did not exist but were attributed to the period of Marie Antoinette. Mr. G. W. Lambert, after making a close analysis of the experience, concludes that the two ladies did not see a garden as it existed at the time of Marie Antoinette, but had "seen" one which had been planned by an Antoine Richard, but never executed. In other words, the two ladies had contacted the imaginary garden of Antoine Richard (*Journal* S.P.R., Vol. XXXVII, 1953–54).

The type of experience related in *An Adventure* is not uncommon. A similar retrocognitive experience will be found in *Without Knowing Mr. Walkley* (1939), by Edith Olivier:

§ Edith Olivier was superintending the Wiltshire Women's Land Army during the War. On this occasion she was motoring and on the way to Avebury. She left the car in order better to see the prehistoric monument, for which, like Stonehenge, Avebury is famous. On this particular evening a village fair happened to be in progress. She saw the flames and torches from booths and shows. "Some rather primitive swingboats flew in and out of this dim circle of light: cocoanuts rolled hairily from the sticks upon which they had been planted: bottles were shivered by gunshots and tinkled as they fell to the ground. And all the time, the little casual crowd of villagers strayed with true Wiltshire indifference from one sight to another." §

But no such fair existed at this time! Nine years later Edith Olivier discovered that a Fair had formerly been held at Avebury every year. It was abolished in 1850.

Thus the sense of re-living past scenes is very vivid. This is also the case where sensitives "psychometrize" objects, the objects acting as means to place the sensitives *en rapport* with past events.

If the power of thought to create objective or quasi-objective images be a fact, it would have a bearing on our understanding of some of the phenomena of the spiritualistic seance where "spirits" are described as clothed. This usually causes derision in the skeptic. Yet if mediums always described spirits as surrounded by vaporous clouds, might we not say these were just descriptions of conventionalized ideas of what spirits should be? The clothes are so incongruous that it inclines one to the view that something in the nature of real forms is being perceived. And if thought-forms are an actuality, then our much maligned

mediums may indeed be "seeing" something and not just indulging their imaginations and powers of dramatization. This, however, does not mean that spirits of the deceased are necessarily being cognized.

Precognitive and Retrocognitive Images Compared

It will be noted that the examples given in this chapter all relate to past scenes or to the creation of images in the present. We are not so likely to boggle at accepting such phenomena because, granting the possibility of creating images, at least they would be the product of past and present minds. But what are we to say about images of future events?

Is there any fundamental difference between the paranormal cognizance of past events and that of future ones? The natural reply would be that we *can* conceive of past events leaving traces, but not of future events doing so. Future events have not existed. But is this not the case with past events of the type we have been considering? They also have no existence in the normal sense of the word, although they once did exist. The events which are happening to us now will become past, and we ordinarily say they have ceased to exist. We describe them as memories. But what do we mean when we say that events exist in our memories?

The Brain and Memory

It is usually supposed that events leave traces in the brain, and that memory is due to the reactivation of these traces. This is a puzzling theory. No one has ever seen a memory in a brain. Memories are psychological experiences and the brain is com-

posed of physical tissue. Our psychological life is rich and varied, comprising an almost infinite number of distinct experiences. There are the subtleties of abstract thinking with many fine shades of verbal definition, and supreme over all is the search for truth and the response to beauty and goodness.

The surgeon with his scalpel does not discover in the brain all these living experiences. What he observes is nervous tissue which extends into the white cords called nerves. The efferent and afferent impulses of these nerves may be studied, but by what miracle do they become translated into psychological experiences? How indeed does a nerve impulse become transformed into something entirely different, say, the mental experience of red? These nervous impulses are similar to the dots and dashes of Morse code. They need to be translated in order to make sense. It may be true to say that the dots and dashes are necessary to convey a message to a living person, but this is very different from saying dots and dashes create the thought. A similar relationship exists between the nervous impulses of the brain and the consciousness which translates these impulses. Is it not therefore inaccurate to say that "memories are in the brain"? The fact is that memories are as "non-existent" as are future events. Yet as a matter of experience we *do* remember the past, so in order to account for this we adopt the theory that memories have left traces in the brain.

Now the brain is a very wonderful instrument, and we by no means understand the way it works. But it is *not* the originator of our total psychological experience. It is our instrument. To try to assess the part it plays in memory would take us far beyond the limits of our present subject. But we may say this: The brain—like all physical things—is composed of electrons, and if, as Professor A. N. Whitehead expresses it, "The atom is transforming itself into an organism . . . " (*Science and the Modern*

World, 1925, p. 149), then the electronic organisms of the brain could have specialized functions which, while not being *repositories* of memory, could form linkages with the non-physical basis of memory. To use an analogy (and similar ones have been used by William James and Henri Bergson), we might regard the brain as a radio which enables us to tune in to certain limited aspects of reality. The transformers, valves, etc., are specialized to enable us to tune in to particular rates of vibration. Destruction of the radio does not destroy the broadcasting, but only the reception on our particular set.

A writer on popular aspects of science in a recent article states that "the brain never forgets." He then deals with Dr. Wilder Penfield's experiments in probing the brain with tiny electric currents, in consequence of which forgotten memories are released. The conclusion drawn from these experiments is that memories are in the brain. Such a conclusion conforms to the general mechanistic approach to psychological problems. We should, however, clearly distinguish between *facts*, and the *interpretation of facts*. There is no reason to doubt that certain areas in the brain are specialized to form linkages with specific experiences, but this is very different from saying that the memories themselves are in the brain. When further the statement is made that "the brain scans the record of past experiences and interprets them," we are misreading the implications of the facts.

The modern tendency towards specialization causes judgments to be formed on limited foundations. Many of the materialistic views regarding the relationship of the brain to consciousness would not be held if there were a wider acquaintance with the facts of psychical research and of paranormal phenomena generally. These facts alone discredit the premises which lie at the root of the assumption that mind and brain are one.

But it is not only paranormal phenomena which lead one to the conclusion that memories are not in the brain. Experiments under hypnosis show that memories often become clearer and more detailed when the brain is temporarily in abeyance. Normally, in order to remember, we need to pay close attention to the subject in hand, and if we wish to memorize a piece of poetry, we need to repeat it frequently. In other words, our normal memory functions best when our brain is alert, well supplied with blood, and healthy. This is the principle on which all learning is based.

Subconscious and Normal Memory Compared

But this does not appear to be the case with subconscious memory. Here minute details which were hardly noticed consciously seem to be recorded without effort or special attention. What is more puzzling, the subconscious memory is most clear when the brain is quiescent as in trance and hypnotic states. I have in my other books given examples of this well-known fact, including one case of a young man who was at the point of death through drowning. This account was written out for me and I repeat it below:

§ Only for a few seconds was I conscious of sinking. Then dropping ever so rapidly through a pale green world through which hazily and with terrific speed all the events of my life seemed to whirl around me. Crowds of people hurried about me. All I had ever known was flung into this great whirl. The green was gradually fading and a golden light came suddenly and clearly illuminated each particle of the memory.

Here the memory of the events became so clear that they were re-experienced. Yet all the time even in episodes unconnected with them, there were all the crowds of people. The final images before regaining consciousness were amazingly complete with a wealth of detail, even to sunlight on a blade of grass, the willows in bloom, the hum of bees among the catkins, and the acrid dampish odor of the black earth covered with decaying willow twigs. These were details of my life when I was five years old. I remember as particularly vivid the impressions of a nurse with whom I had lived for two years at this time. §

These "at point of death" memories seem to have a kinship with psychometric visions. In these cases a sensitive seems to contact a memory of events connected with an object. We do not suppose that the object itself has a memory, but certainly in cases where I have experimented, an object has been the means of contacting images which represent past events associated with the object.

We do not understand the exact role of the object in enabling a sensitive to contact a record of past events, but we are in many respects also ignorant of how the brain performs the same function in respect to personal memories. To say that memories are in the object is just about on a par with saying that memories are in the brain.

We are, therefore, still faced with the question, where are memories? Of course, we should not use the pronoun "where" as it implies that memories can occupy space. However, they must have existence, or we could not remember. Intrinsically, therefore, the problem presented by memory is akin to that of precognition.

Causation and Precognitive Images

Retrocognitive images are difficult enough to understand, but precognitive ones tend to send our minds reeling into a new dimension. This is why the effort to understand is so necessary. It brings us face to face with revolutionary concepts.

There is one aspect which is peculiar to an understanding of precognitive images; it is that of causation. We can attempt to account for a retrocognitive image, such as that of *An Adventure,* by seeking out the causal linkage between the experience of the two ladies at Versailles with the past event itself. The question then would be, how does the past event cause images to occur in the minds of the two ladies? For instance, a reincarnationist might say that these ladies had actually lived through these scenes in a past life. The causal linkage would then be supposed to exist within the psychological make-up of the ladies. With a little ingenuity other theories would suggest themselves, all designed to save our faith in the normal causal sequences. We feel more comfortable trying to explain paranormal images when those images relate to the past. But when images relate to the future, causal connection seems lacking, and we are baffled.

If we could accept the objectivity of "thought-forms" they might provide a key idea to enable us to understand precognition without too much disturbance of our usual way of thinking.

In broad outline, the theory we offer is that in both retrocognitive and precognitive cases we are in touch with objective and dynamic images. Therefore, in both cases we have examples of what I have called subliminal causation. In other words, the images which impress themselves on the outer consciousness are reflections of inner events. We shall have to express this

theory more fully, but in any case it is not the complete answer to the problem. Various explanatory hypotheses may have to be adopted for the various kinds of precognition.

We now ask, what is the status of precognitive images, and why are some events foreseen? Also, in the light of precognition, are we bound or free?

How may a man know where consciousness ceases?
It is right that he should think to the limits
of his power, but his *limits should not be*
made into frontiers.

13 *The Universe as a Conscious Whole*

What Does the Universe Mean?

Our interpretation of the phenomena of precognition leads to the conception of the universe as a conscious Whole. This is in direct contrast to that which regards it as a product of the chance motions of matter during periods of time measured in light-years which baffle our imagination. When we ask, what does the universe mean, the question immediately arises, Mean for whom? And then we realize that all conceptions of the universe are ours. If we like to conceive the universe as being merely the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms, with life as a by-product, well and good. But never can we escape from the ever-present reality that we are witnessing *our own* picture of the universe. In other words we are translating our sense-data into concepts.

Our immediate acquaintance is with a set of ideas which are products of our own consciousness. We project these ideas into a picture which is supposed to represent an external reality. If the universe seems to be meaningless, it is because we have made

it so. Like all phenomena, it needs to be interpreted. If, through our instruments and with a background of mechanistic thinking, we appear to observe a universe which overawes us by its meaningless immensity, then at least we should realize that it is *our own* concept that is overawing us.

In the first place, there is no logical need for us to have postulated that the universe is as it appears in terms of sense-data. If we realize that even the simplest physical object is not in itself as it appears to be, then this applies to conceptions based on sense-data derived through telescopes and other instruments.

Any generalizations we may make about the meaning of the universe must start from the self-evident truth of our own consciousness. We are alive and thinking beings. This is the axiom on which all judgments must of necessity be based. We may proceed to argue that our consciousness is the product of this or that condition, but this is a secondary conclusion, and depends on the fact that we are conscious.

The Denial of Consciousness

I once met a man who declared that he doubted his own existence. I asked him to make the assertion that he did not exist. He saw at once that he needed to exist even to assert that he did not exist! The behaviorist is in a similar position. He claims that thought is only movements in the body and larynx. In this extreme statement of materialism, thoughts may be equated with movements in matter, specifically with the matter of the brain. He then proceeds to study the behavior of matter and comes to the conclusion that matter is behaving as though it has a mind. To many of us this seems to be a fatuous procedure, for if the behaviorist had not a mind in the first place he would not be

studying behaviorism! Of course, there are many definitions of mind, and it is no doubt sound not to speak of "the" mind as though it were an entity. Also movements of the larynx may be conceded to be important in the formulation of thought, but to define mind as a particular type of physical behavior, and then set out to discover the type of behavior we have already postulated as mind, in order to deny the existence of mind, is indeed a peculiar end to an investigatory journey! Again we come back to the first datum of our experience, our existence as thinking beings.

Monism and Pluralism

It has been the aim of both materialists and those opposed to them to discover unity behind apparent diversity. The early Greeks struggled with this problem, and the two main streams of thought, pluralism and monism, have dominated philosophic thinking.

Monism, which is the conception that the universe is a Whole and a unity, assumes many expressions. Parmenides postulated a single cosmic substance. But monism can also be theistic, in which case God becomes the root ground of the universe. The monism of materialism is, of course, that of matter. In contrast with monism, we have the different types of pluralism, in which two or more permanent principles are supposed to lie at the root of things.

It is not necessary that we should here become involved in the various philosophical arguments for or against monism and pluralism. Any good textbook of philosophy may be consulted for these. Nevertheless, it is desirable that we should have some background conceptions regarding the nature of reality. But we

should realize that ideas about reality are not the same as reality itself. Indeed, a set of ideas may act as a screen between us and what lies behind it. However, for purposes of intellectual exposition we are compelled to formulate some concepts.

There is one aspect of the monistic doctrine which has a direct bearing on our discussion. Sometimes the one Reality is postulated as being an unchanging Whole. When this is done, change has to be accounted for. It follows that if Reality is of one nature, infinite and unchanging, then change is a mere appearance or illusion. This is the solution offered by many philosophers and is the *Maya* doctrine of the *Vedanta*.

In contrast to the conception of an unchanging Whole, we have those philosophies in which change is the only reality. In Greek philosophy Heracletus is the philosopher best known as the propounder of the doctrine of the universality of change and in modern times this philosophy is represented by Bergson. When change is elevated to the position of a universal principle, it becomes in fact a form of monism, and the philosophy of Heracletus is so regarded.

My comments on pluralism will be brief, because in my view this can never be the final answer to the problem of Reality. Two or more principles imply limitation, and we immediately ask, limitation by what? So we continue to search for a unifying principle. If, for instance, we postulate God and a Devil as a sort of partnership at the root of things, we instinctively cannot rest until the duality is resolved. In religious terms we naturally feel committed to declare that God is Supreme, and reduce the Devil—if Devil we must have—to a lower status.

The persistent search for unity in the midst of apparent diversity testifies to the mental discomfort we experience at failure to resolve differences into something more fundamental. There is something very satisfying in modern conceptions which

see the infinite variety of physical things as being due to combinations of one thing—which, of course, is not a thing—the atom.

Being and Becoming

However, the problem of origins remains. How does the universe arise, and why? What is the relation between Being and Becoming? Is the universe an unchanging Whole, and if so is change an illusion? If on the other hand, change is universal, then how can we account for the appearance of permanence?

The solution to these and many other problems which have teased the brains of so many depends on our postulates regarding the nature of reality. The ancient thinkers both in India and Greece conceived various substances as being the primordial ground of the universe, from water to fire, and in the case of Parmenides, a living universal substance. But the keener and more inspired minds who were the authors of the *Upanishads* saw consciousness as the only reality and postulated the ground of all that is as being the universal Self, indefinable yet realizable. The "otherness" which is the phenomenal universe is not a real "otherness" but is an affirmation of "not-Self." Or, to use spatial imagery, it is a projection from the Universal Self of that which is other than Itself. In this way the undifferentiated, and therefore unmanifested Brahman, realizes Itself in what we might call the universal mirror of otherness. This Hindu concept was not the result of mere reasoning, but was due to the direct insight of generations of sages, and finds its culminating statement in the *Vedanta.*

Certain mystical experiences in the West can be interpreted to support this view of the universe as a conscious Whole. How-

ever, apart from this non-rational approach to the nature of Reality, it commends itself to our reason because it simplifies many intellectual problems, and in particular that of the relation of Being to Becoming.

Firstly, we may regard the whole universe as a thought-product, and this brings us back to the indubitable experience of ourself. The universe is no longer an alien creation into which somehow we have stumbled by accident. On the contrary, the processes of the macrocosm are reflected in ourselves. So in studying ourselves we may know the inherent nature of the universe, which although it presents itself as an external manifestation, is on the deepest level of our awareness, within us, although at this stage of our understanding, "within" and "without" have lost their meaning.

It is not our purpose to study in detail the evidence of mystical experience in the East and in the West, but we shall need to consider it in our final summing-up. What is immediately relevant is to apply the concept of a conscious universe to the particular problem of precognition.

"Causes" and "effects" are not presented to us neatly wrapped and labelled, so that they may be identified. We find out which is which only by the order in which we perceive them.

14 *Solutions*

We are now in a position to consider solutions to the problem of precognition. First let us remind ourselves of the essential nature of the problem. It is this: does an event exist at the time it is precognized? If so, what is the nature of its existence, and why does it exist?

Our answer to the first question is that an event does exist. The preceding chapters on the nature of the subliminal consciousness and of thought-forms give us the clue to the type of existence events have at the time they are precognized. The theory of subliminal causation is reasonably supported by a body of facts, especially in parapsychology. It is not unduly difficult to mass the evidence for the nonphysical reality of psychic existents.

However, we cannot leave it at that. We must go further and ask why do these precognized events take the forms they do?

Questions which begin with "why" always pose the toughest problems! In this particular case it takes us back to fundamentals, and virtually raises the question why any events at all occur, including that of our own existence.

The Materialist Conception of Causality

The answer of materialism is that all events occur because of past events, and of course from this standpoint the past events are material ones. The generalization of this statement is called the law of cause and effect. But this law of cause and effect is not so obvious as it appears to common sense. We more or less take it for granted that every effect has its cause, and conceive a continuous chain. But when we examine the links of this chain we find that, taking them singly, we cannot place the label "cause" or "effect" on any one of them considered in isolation.

In fact, what was effect yesterday becomes cause today. Does this imply that the law of cause and effect is only the name we give to a continuous sequence? This would hardly seem to be the case. We do in fact distinguish between "before" and "because." That is to say, it seems to be necessary that certain events should occur before others can happen. So, in spite of the fact that we cannot discover any distinguishing marks on an event in isolation which bear the characteristics of "cause" or "effects," we yet believe that certain immediately antecedent events play the role of cause or causes.

Interpretation of "Immediately Antecedent"

Here another difficulty arises. It is implicit in the words "immediately antecedent." The law of causality requires that cause and effect should be contiguous. When, however, we speak of effects as being the result of distant causes we are touching upon one of those tender spots in the conceptual structure of materialism. The behavior of planets in their orbits is described in terms of gravitational attraction, and we conceive of "force" as operat-

ing over space. But this is something of a scientific scandal, and is an attempt to get over the difficulty of spatial separation and bring two events into the contiguity required by the classical statement of the law of causality. Einstein's mathematical conceptions, of course, explain planetary behavior without recourse to terms such as "force" or gravitation in the old mechanical sense. So events which to our senses seem to be separated are by the new conception brought into contiguity.

If our view of the universe as a living Whole could be accepted, many of the difficulties of causation would be removed. For instance, we would not need to scan a line of almost infinite extent into the past in order to account for an event in the present. We can explain an event by regarding it as a process of *becoming* whereby images first apprehended privately actualize into public events. As the whole process is an adventure in consciousness, we have broken through the conceptual "sound barrier" which has forced us to live in a world of discrete things made of "matter."

Why do Events Occur?

Now we can attempt to answer the question, why do events exist in the subliminal consciousness? In Chapter 12 I advanced reasons for the objectivity of "thought-forms." However, it will have been noted that the thought-forms so considered are the product of past and present conscious activity. This does not help us towards a solution of precognition.

Suppose, however, we assume that the creation of thought-forms by living people in the present is only an instance of what is occurring on a cosmic level. That in fact the whole universe is the expression of universal mind; then we may see that the

thought creations of individuals must be exhibiting an activity similar to that of the Cosmos in which we have our being.

Having rid ourselves of the bugbear of the duality of mind and matter, we can now have another look at the universe in terms of consciousness and forms. Both are expressions of the fundamental livingness of the infinite Whole, for which we have no adequate descriptive terms. What we may now postulate is that from the primordial inexpressible and undifferentiated Unity there emerges a primary duality. If this first stage towards manifestation is conceived in terms of a differentiation within consciousness, we avoid all those problems associated with monism which *ex hypothesis* cannot admit differentiation into anything other than itself—matter, for instance. For an analogy which is not too misleading, consider the workings of our own minds which harbor and create ideas without in any way affecting their unity. Of course, the terms "mind" and "in the mind" need definition, but our point is equally valid if we merely note that the psychological activity which takes the form of image-making proceeds without disturbing the unity of identity.

For purposes of our exposition we should note that ideas are non-temporal, although they manifest in terms of sequence, which we call time. We often hear of "God's Plan." Providing we avoid anthropomorphic conceptions, the idea of a cosmic plan, suitably interpreted, I would accept. I shall later have something to say about the folly of making conceptual images of the nature of ultimate Reality. For our present purpose we are dealing with the process of manifestation and not with the indescribable non-dual Reality, the Para-Brahman of the *Vedanta*.

There are those who equate "The Eternal Now" with ultimate Reality. In some sense this must be the case. But for this concept to be useful as an interpretation of precognition we would have to define the status of events within "The Eternal Now." Perhaps

the Platonic archetypal ideas may aid us in understanding the manifestation of the non-temporal in terms of the temporal.

Jig-saw Causation

As we have seen, causation is usually regarded as operating on a plane of linear time. That is to say, we conceive a chain of events leading into the past, thus producing an event in the present, which we regard as an effect, which effect in turn becomes a cause of future events, and so on to infinity. We have also seen that a true cause must be contiguous to the effect. In other words, the causation chain must operate without a break between the links.

Now this condition could be satisfied by conceiving causation in terms of a jig-saw puzzle, where each piece has its right place and no other. Each section belongs to a picture and when it is in its place it is part of a whole. If this analogy of a jig-saw puzzle is conceived as a thought-pattern, we may see how many events and things which from one point of view seem to be separate, may from another viewpoint be regarded as belonging to a unifying thought-construct. Therefore, to know one part of the picture can give us knowledge of the other parts. If we can suppose that these thought-patterns exist on the subliminal plane of being, then precognition becomes thinkable.

We have further to postulate that every phenomenal occurrence is a projection of all or part of these thought-patterns. In other words, the events which happen here, in a physical sense, are parts of a thought-pattern which is out of our time. When, therefore, a percipient sees the injured left hind leg of her dog, she is seeing part of a picture on another plane of being. The complete picture would, of course, include the truck and the man driving it, which, as we ordinarily say, caused the injury.

Everything is connected with everything else, and the universe is the expression of thought embodied and limited by forms of infinite variety, the whole pulsating dynamism of creative activity being within the infinite incomprehensible Whole we call by many names.

Teleological Causation

There is one sense in which we may regard causation as working from the future. This is usually called teleological causation, which term is used to express the fact that the end determines the development of phenomena. Such development, therefore, is being controlled by an existing plan or design to be realized in the future. So, for instance, it might be conceived an acorn's growth is determined by some inner necessity to become an oak and not an elm. In human terms our present behavior is often controlled by a future commitment, such as a journey to be undertaken, or even a goal towards which we are striving.

The concept of design in nature and the part teleological causation plays has stimulated vigorous discussion and given rise to opposing schools of thought into which we need not go. But teleological causation provides us with examples of the manner in which we may conceive of an inner plan determining present events. It is, as we have said, a type of causation from the future to the present.

A Closer Look at some Precognitive Cases

Firstly, we have those cases to which the idea of a plan behind manifestation seems more applicable. I refer to cases where events in a personal life are precognized; Case 37 relating to my

own experience, for instance. It will be noticed that the particular precognitions were fragmentary. Only a few bits of the "jigsaw picture" were given. But they were significant bits. It was seen that I would go to Australia and not to South America, and that there I would meet a particular woman. But years before these statements were made to me, bits of the inner patterns were infiltrating through the consciousness of another person—the person I was to meet and marry—for she "seemed to be told" that she would have to wait a "long, *very long time*" before she met the man of great significance for her. As has been related in Case 38, the recognition when it occurred *many* years later was instantaneous.

Here then we have a good instance of precognition which fits neatly into the concept of an inner plan in course of manifestation. Many similar cases could be quoted. Case 41, in which Mrs. Bendit relates the prediction regarding the man she would marry, comes into this category.

Do these cases imply destiny or determinism? We will consider this aspect in the next chapter. At the moment we cite this type of precognition as a good example of the theory of subliminal patterns in process of expressing themselves on the outer plan. Longer range precognitions would imply that the percipient is in contact with a much deeper level in which the plan of world events has an existence, perhaps in the minds of beings beyond our comprehension.

Intervention of Non-Physical Beings

Theories which imply that non-physical beings are influencing the occurrence of events should not be ruled out because of some disability on our part to conceive the nature of non-physical ex-

istence. Granted certain premises regarding the nature of the universe, then the existence of non-physical beings is reasonable. Therefore it may be expected that they can, and perhaps do, influence events on earth. As we have already said, this would not touch the real problem of precognition, but it would provide us with an idea of the machinery by which certain precognitions are fulfilled. If also such beings were influencing events on earth because of some plan to which they had access, then the problem of precognition would be pushed back to these hypothetical non-physical beings, but it would become intelligible to the extent that they were reading a plan of what must be. They indeed would be the agents of fulfilling such a plan. For further examples which support the view that non-physical beings do intervene in our events, see an article entitled "Forecasts and Precognition," by C. Drayton Thomas (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. XLVIII, 1946, pp. 306–329).

There are other types of precognition which might be interpreted as cognizance of efforts on the part of superphysical intelligences to bring about just those events which are forecast. But in any case all precognition is the result of subliminal awareness. Therefore the key to the mystery is to know more about the powers of our own consciousness.

The Detection of Hidden Intentions

Sometimes a prediction may be accounted for by supposing that our inner intentions have been telepathically detected. We do not know consciously of all the latent impulses which will result in future action. They often are buried beyond the reach of our normal consciousness. Yet they can be potent and affect sensitives. When they are recounted, perhaps with veridical

details and dramatization, they seem to be genuine precognitions. But they are only the supernormal detection of normal tendencies in our nature. If we also assume the existence of nonphysical intelligences, then these character tendencies, which are hidden from us, may presumably be seen on "the other side" and be transmitted to us through mediums. I do not regard these as genuine precognitions, but as they often are so regarded, I mention this possibility in order to complete my review of "explanations."

Trivial Cases and Thought-Patterns

The idea of a subliminal "thought-plan" influencing events may seem reasonable when the events are significant ones either in our personal lives or of world importance. It is the precognition of trivial incidents which causes us to boggle. However, I see no reason why they should not be of the same type as larger and more important events. All we have to postulate is that no detailed physical occurrence is without its inner determinant.

Now this is precisely what the consistent materialist must maintain. For is it not his dogma that nothing occurs by chance? That in fact everything which exists is just where it is and when it is because it manifests the operation of universal law? He would say that if we could understand all the antecedent causes operating at any particular moment we would be able to predict future behavior with utmost certainty. Of course, he means physical causes, and he looks to the past for his determining factors.

Here we see a picture of a massive past pressing on the present, determining and controlling the manifestation of every detail. The fact that it is impossible to know all the circumstances and influences which determine any particular occurrence does

not disturb the materialist's faith that theoretically such a knowledge, if obtainable, *would* enable him to predict the future. Such prediction, if it were possible, would, of course, be of the inferential variety.

Internal versus External Causation

When, however, we are faced with non-inferential knowledge of the future we can take a leaf out of the materialist's book, and say that the occurrence of events in the present and future is not due to the total picture of *the past* but to a contemporary non-physical pattern in process of manifesting. Thus we have a kind of causation operating from within outwards. This applies to trivial as well as to important events. We may agree with the materialist that nothing occurs by chance, but we go further and look for the law of *becoming* in the realm of consciousness. Thus we conceive thoughts as having duration in form, and forms being vehicles for other forms; both physical and non-physical. If we expressed this view diagrammatically we would draw one of those Japanese boxes which contain a series of boxes one within the other.

Precognitions of Death

We will now consider precognitions of death, of which we have given several examples. Do they indicate that our life-span is predetermined? I am inclined to think that they do. On our assumptions it would seem that every manifested unit comes into existence, figuratively speaking, with a built-in clock which is designed to go for only a certain length of time. Again, if this idea were confined to the life of human beings it might be accept-

able because presumably the hereditary genes are determining causes of the physical body. But we must follow the logic of the hypothesis and apply it to objects. If this seems incomprehensible, it is because we persist in regarding physical objects—assuming they exist—as things made of matter, and what is more, of matter conceived as a non-living substance. We have perhaps said enough to show that philosophically such a view is fraught with the greatest intellectual difficulty.

The further question arises, how may we explain the foreseeing of incidental details associated with a particular person's death? For instance, in Cases 12, 13 and 17, not only is death foreseen but in Case 12 it is precognized that Mademoiselle Muza's end would be "terrible" and in Case 13, a railway or automobile accident was predicted as the cause of Dr. Tillyard's death. Again, in Case 17, we have the curious detail of the velvet curtains. From these and other similar cases we may be compelled to conclude that an individual is not isolated from his environment; that in fact he and his circumstances form the total picture of his manifestation.

Provided we arrive at the right destination,
the route we follow is of minor importance.

15 *Trivial Events: Three Hypotheses*

I doubt whether any single hypothesis will be sufficient to account for all the facts of precognition. As it seems to me that the crux of the problem lies in the precognition of trivial events, I think we must examine these cases more closely. The general principles we have already outlined will be our guide in endeavoring to understand this difficult problem. I summarize these principles as follows:

§ 1. That the universe is a manifestation of consciousness.

2. That the physical world is the end-product of inner processes of consciousness.

3. That thinking and feeling are not ephemeral by-products of cerebral movements, but on the contrary can and do take on forms on what we must broadly describe as non-physical planes.

4. That a precognition is the becoming aware of subliminal thought-patterns or images, many of which are due to become manifest as public events at the physical level of expression.

5. That sense data exist independently of our personal consciousness. Yet they are not grouped, as it were, round a physical

object, but have an existence in their own right in terms of independent images conceived to exist on a non-physical plane.

6. That for an image to become actual, that is, to become a public event at the physical level, it must impinge on a physical functioning consciousness, which thus provides the means for its objectification. §

I will now outline three hypotheses which, taken as a whole, might serve to make intelligible most cases of precognition.

Time-duration for Physical Objects

The first hypothesis follows logically on our view of the nature of the universe. We must keep it in mind that physical objects, if they exist, are only known in terms of sense data. Therefore, the postulated physical object could very well be a living entity. So if it seems reasonable to suppose that persons manifest in accordance with some chronological limitation, then the same law could apply to the sense data which masquerade under the forms we call objects.

It is not difficult to conceive that technological constructions and man-made things in general are the expression of an idea and if left alone may be said to have a time-duration inherent in their construction. But what are we to say when the precognition is that, let us say, of an accidental breakage, as in the case of the broken basin (Case 24)? The percipient sees a total picture: "China basin broken into little bits like a smashed egg-shell. Someone has just dropped it and is watching—a fat woman." When this picture came into the percipient's mind, the basin was unbroken. Why then was it perceived as broken? Consider how in fact it was broken. "A door slammed and a china basin

fell from a shelf round the room." It would appear that the basin was in a precarious position and the owner of the cafe—the fat woman of the precognition—might have expected some such accident sooner or later. The precognition therefore would be due to contacting the total cafe-situation on the subliminal level where the precarious situation of the basin was apparent. But, in any case, the basin is not an isolated existent but is part of a total manifestation and its "fate" is determined by the whole in which it inheres.

A similar line of approach may be made to the understanding of any precognitive case which includes trivial details. In Case 34, a woman dreamed she was being followed by a monkey. At the time of the dream the monkey was actually in existence. The dream was a "preview" of her own future experience. Her decision to go for a walk brought her into the circumstances as dreamed. The actual experience and the dream, on my theory, are parts of the one event. This also applies to Case 35, where the dream was the seeing of five burnt patches in a carpet. It can be surmised that the lady had her carpet much in mind, as it was "a new one." She also would know of the servant's habit of carrying live coals from room to room. So the dream again represents a total situation which "materialized" from the subliminal plane.

The fact is, we *must* postulate that events have some kind of existence when the precognition occurs. So, as I have already said, the problem of precognition may be summarized as follows: *A set of images occurs in a mind at one point in time. At a later point in time another series of events occurs, and this is regarded as fulfilling the precognition. What is the relationship between the two sets of events?*

In my view the relationship is not one of cause and effect, *but one between different aspects of the same event—one on the subliminal level and the other on the physical.* It is as though

a dream assumes the form of physical reality. Similarly with the circumstances surrounding death. The inner pattern is a complete whole including the circumstances as well as the time of death.

Under this heading where we are considering the time-duration of objects we may refer again to Hinton's theory of a fourth dimension. According to this theory, every object has extension in a dimension other than those of our familiar three of length, breadth and height. For the reasons I have given in Chapter 8, I find this presentation difficult to accept, but I do agree with one aspect of it. It is that any physical object is only partially expressed in our familiar world of sense data. Therefore, it is its status in the unmanifested part of it, if I may express it thus, which determines the precognition of its future.

Subliminal Inferential Knowledge

This hypothesis is less likely to offend against our ordinary way of thinking about causation than do some of the other theories. While the essential problem of precognition is its non-inferential character, knowledge which is non-inferential to our ordinary rational thinking may be inferential on the subliminal level. Normally, future events are predicted because of close observation of present happenings and knowledge of what has passed in any particular instance. The more detailed our knowledge, the more accurate will be our prediction. We need a great deal of information about the geographical distribution of pressure-systems and wind velocities in order to predict with any degree of accuracy, next week's weather.

But there are people who seem to have a sixth sense regarding weather. They read the signs "in their bones" as it were, and

primitive people whose lives are bound closely to nature detect signs of coming weather which are imperceptible to those who have cut themselves off from the countryside and the Bush. Similarly the black tracker sees footprints which are invisible to our untrained eyes. So it is true to say that many of us go through life blind to many subtle influences which surround us, and which, if understood and interpreted, could lead to knowledge which to some might seem paranormal.

There is, indeed, evidence that some people possess a remarkable acuity of the senses; so much so that it is standard practice to guard against this in all experiments in serious psychical research. Now where is the borderline between unusual acuteness of sensory awareness, which enables forecasts to be made based on subtle and normally undetectable impressions, and cases of true precognition which clearly could not be of the inferential type in the ordinary sense of the word? Could we say that there is not any borderline as such, but that the powers of inference shade off imperceptibly until they become subliminal? If this were the case, then at least some precognitions could be accounted for as being examples of subliminal inference.

Suppose, for instance, that certain signs and portents could be read by our subliminal consciousness; then perhaps some events could be predicted because of conditions which the subliminal consciousness perceives now. For instance, to a trained engineer a crack, measured in thousandths of an inch in the metal part of an airplane, and undetectable by ordinary visual inspection, would enable him to predict that, subject to the stresses and strains of so many hours flying, the airplane would be sure to crash.

Can we conceive that our subliminal consciousness has on occasion the capacity to become aware of inner flaws in the structure of some technological objects, such as bridges, loco-

motives, ships, etc., and that this inner knowledge wells up into the normal consciousness in the form of precognitive pictures, dreams or premonitions?

Such a theory is rather attractive because it leaves undisturbed our normal view of causation, and if true would account for many of the predictions of shipwrecks and some types of accident. Case 4, for instance, might be accounted for by a subliminal knowledge of a defect in the railway track where the locomotive ran off the lines. However, a close study of the data will show, I think, that it is only certain types of precognition which could be explained by this type of hypothesis. The well-known *Gordon Davis* case, for instance, requires an entirely different kind of explanation. In this case a house and conspicuous articles of furniture were described by a sensitive to Dr. S. G. Soal at a sitting. But the future occupant of the house did not take up residence at this house until eleven months later, and at the time of the sitting some of the furniture had not come into his possession. (*Proc.* S.P.R., Vol XXXV, 1925, pp. 559–589).

The Theory of Recurrence

For the understanding of some cases of precognition, especially those which include trivial incidents, I think we might usefully look again at the doctrine of recurrence. We would not accept it in the form expressed by Ouspensky. If we are prepared to concede the objectivity of thought-forms, then we must suppose that these forms have duration, and if so, why should they not, for a period, manifest cyclically? This cyclic law, if law it be, would apply to individuals; thus some form of pre-existence would logically follow. I have elsewhere stated the case for reincarnation, but here I am only interested in such a doctrine in its bearing on precognition.

The assumption I now submit is that *all* forms—not only persons—manifest cyclically. The concept is not to be understood as a repetition in time, because in my view, time should not be substantialized. However, events may persist and under suitable conditions come to the surface or re-manifest. I must here interpose that personal survival of physical death is implied in the above assumption. The point I now make is that pre-existence of the individual is a corollary to survival, and this being the case, there is no reason why the cycle of manifestation should not repeat itself. If this is so, then there may be, figuratively speaking, certain "environmental blocks" in which the individual is embedded, as it were. So the individual reincarnates, carrying with him "circumstantial chunks" of past environments. That these scenes with all their circumstantial detail have some form of duration seems to be borne out by the Versailles, Avebury and many similar cases (see Chapter 12).

The whole process must be conceived in terms of thought-patterns. If the above line of reasoning can be accepted, then the explanation of the precognition of circumstantial details, such as in Cases 12, 13, and 17, may well be that past circumstances are repeating themselves. J. B. Priestly adopted this theme for his series of Time plays.

The essential mechanism of the Hindu conception of *Karma* would surely imply that individuals manifest within an aura of thought-forms. On this view, therefore, precognition would be awareness of a past event in process of repeating itself.

We might here note that in all precognitive visions and dreams the sequence of events proceeds along the normal line of common sense experience. Thus, if the dream is of an automobile accident, the dreamer will be driving along the road and in an apparently normal sequence come to certain features of the landscape until the accident occurs, as would be the case

if it were actually happening. This shows that causality appears normal, at least *within the dream,* even though *the dream as a whole* is contradicting our usual notions of sequence.

So many conceptions in connection with precognition are topsy-turvy that it is with relief that we do not witness an exhibition of the reversal of causality within the dream—like seeing the collision first, and the car traveling towards the point of collision last, as in a film unrolled backwards! The dream as a whole occurs, of course, before the car has left the garage, but everything happens to the dreamer in logical order. Does this indicate that the past-to-future pattern of becoming is fundamental, the only point being to determine the frame of reference within which we measure the sequence?

Theories and Backgrounds

Various hypotheses have been reviewed and it has been suggested that a combination of these will enable a solution to be found to the problem of precognition. However, explanatory theories are never considered in a vacuum. They are accepted or rejected according to the background of the person to whom they are addressed.

These backgrounds constitute the mental "air" we breathe. They are collective creations against which we do our thinking and all new ideas have to dovetail into a group of concepts which education and tradition have imposed upon us from our earliest years.

Within the orbit of the general tradition and culture of a country or civilization there are also particular groups which have formed strong, well-knit bodies of concepts. This especially applies to religious groups, members of which think in common,

and share the same history and background. In consequence they use words in special senses applicable to the mesh of thought which has enveloped their minds from infancy. These groups are virtually living in separate worlds, and although they may be communicating by means of the same dictionary language yet the words used have a special meaning for each group. In a sense, therefore, there is no real communication between one group and another.

I need not specify any particular groups, but most of us know how difficult it is to discuss certain subjects with members of some organizations who measure everything said against a background of authority and an uncritically accepted tradition. All this has relevance in connection with our thinking about precognition. Some ideas will be accepted and others rejected purely because they fit in with, or contradict, ideas within a fixed frame of reference. But most important of all is the general background of the age in which we live. For most of us the physical world of sense-experience is the only one we know; therefore for those who have no dawning glimpse of anything else the common sense world becomes the standard of judgment. When a theory is presented for consideration we must know against which background it is to be assessed. None of us is free of conceptual entanglements. I myself believe that the problem of precognition can be solved along the general lines I have indicated. But I must go further and express a conception of life based on deeper experiences than those which sensory contacts alone provide. In my view the discreteness of the universe as it appears to the senses is a distorted picture of Reality.

A man may feel free even in the midst of his bonds. He knows that when the cords which bind him are undone he may roam without restraint, even as a bird may fly when the cage is opened. Freedom in bondage —a strange paradox!

16 *Free or Bound*

If it is established that certain events in an individual's life can be foreseen, does this mean that such a life is predetermined? And if so, would we have to regard freedom of the will as illusory? Before such questions can be answered it is necessary that we examine more closely the notion of freedom.

What is Freedom?

It is clear in a practical sense that freedom in the abstract has no meaning. It would be more true to say we have freedoms, rather than freedom. Living as most of us do in urban communities, we are restricted in almost every direction, and exist within a net of regulations and restrictions imposed by custom which are the inevitable result of living elbow to elbow with other people.

All our freedoms, therefore, may be described as concessional freedoms, such as the freedom of assembly; freedom of speech within limits; freedom to travel according to passport regulations, and so on. It amounts to this: wherever a personal unit

exists, surrounded by other personal units, the amount of freedom is determined by the interrelationships within the group. Consequently, behavior patterns are molded and the area for spontaneous freedom is exceedingly restricted.

It is, however, curious to note that in spite of the fact that men for the most part live under yokes of various types, yet they pay homage to the idea of freedom. And what is more significant, even while bound, they act in the false belief that they are free. In personal behavior we proceed on the assumption that our decisions are free. Yet in observing our fellow men we often know without doubt that their actions are the inevitable result of their characters and environment. A man may inwardly believe that he is under no compulsion to have a glass of beer, but we who know the man's past habits can predict with certainty that, given certain circumstances, he will not pass the local "pub" without going in for a drink.

The point of all this is that whatever we may mean by freedom, it certainly is not motiveless freedom. But if actions are governed by motives and motives are the result of character, which in turn is due to physical and psychical factors, partly inherited, partly imposed upon us by environment, and in addition, if we are subjected to instinctual drives, or *libido*, how can we be free?

It will be noticed that in the above statement we have used the personal pronoun "we" which is the collective form of "I." The implication therefore is that there is an individual "I" which has persistence in the midst of the constant changes which characterize the manifesting personality. The argument would then be that in spite of the determining factors involved in character dispositions, environmental pressures, etc., the individual self is inherently free, even if for the most part he is entrapped in mechanistic behavior-patterns. All moral injunction is based on

the assumption that a man knows right from wrong and can act accordingly. Our legal codes assume this; so does religion.

Freedom and Backgrounds

We do not wish to become involved in the ancient controversy of free will versus determinism which has harried so many generations. Perhaps the insolubility of the problem lies in its being incorrectly stated. Also, no solution can be found to any problem if it is discussed against different backgrounds. For the materialist, with his background of mechanical causation, personal freedom must be an illusion. In a physical sense all behavior is governed by past causes. Therefore man is no exception to any other physical phenomenon. The movements of a planet and of a man are manifestations of the same physical laws.

Against such background assumptions it is a waste of time to discuss the possibility of man having what is called "free will." Admittedly a considerable element of doubt regarding a purely mechanical interpretation of the physical universe has arisen through what is called the Principle of Indeterminacy, and the Quantum Theory. But the mechanist can still maintain that although the normal concepts of Time and Space may *not* apply within the atom, the classical laws *are* relevant for larger-scale phenomena.

Yet I think it is obvious that if there is something resembling unpredictability in the "bricks" which are the fundamental units of the physical world, it should cause much misgiving among those who insist on a classical and mechanistic interpretation of physical phenomena in general. This, however, is by the way; the point is that if man is considered as being purely physical, then freedom is an anomaly for it introduces a causal factor outside purely physical sequences. To postulate freedom in the

sense that our choices and decisions can interfere with the physical sequences is to create a *deus ex machina.* But this is absurd if the assumption is that only the machine exists.

The Assumption of the Existence of an Individual Self

Here we have a much more promising basis for assuming "free will." For on this assumption man is not a purely physical creature, but is a psychical entity manifesting in physical conditions. It may be conceded that in practice man is so deeply identified with, and engrossed in the mechanical order of manifestation, that as a matter of practical experience freedom is fitful and perhaps for the majority, non-existent. Yet because of man's status as a non-physical entity, freedom is potentially his birthright.

But this concept is not without its difficulty. This lies in the word "individual." If the self is conceived as a separate entity, then this entity becomes one among many entities and consequently comes under the law of limitation. That is to say, the self manifests within a web of restriction, and to the extent that it manifests within this web it may be just as bound, in theory, as would be the case if it were conceived as a purely physical entity. It is becoming apparent that there is something amiss with our conceptual frame regarding the nature of the self, and we will later have something to say on this point.

Precognition and Freedom

Whatever may be the merits of the philosophic arguments for or against man's freedom, do the facts of precognition weight the scales in favor of determinism?

The first fact which appears in connection with particular precognitions is that as far as the evidence goes, the precognitions are sporadic and relate to very limited portions of a man's total life. We therefore, on the basis of the limited evidence, cannot generalize and say that because *some* events must occur, consequently *all* the incidents in a man's life can be predicted.

Secondly, it will have been noted that the fulfillment of a precognition is ostensibly brought about by what appear to be voluntary decisions. So, in a way, a precognition may be regarded as an awareness of future *voluntary decisions*. But is this not a contradiction in terms? I think it is. For surely the term "voluntary" means that at any given moment we can make such decisions as will alter the course of events. If, however, a series of events is precognized, this means that the events have existence at the time they are cognized. If, therefore, they do actualize, and of course they must, otherwise precognition would not be involved, then are not the "voluntary" decisions which appear to bring about the fulfillment illusory?

It boils down to this: what is the relationship between the image-pattern supposedly prehended by the transcendental self and the subsequent manifestation we call the fulfillment? At the time a person experiences what will later be called a precognition, we cannot say that the "future" is being seen or apprehended. The awareness is of a *present* occurrence. No question of determinism or of freedom is involved at the time of the precognition. Later, a series of physical events occur and are recognized as corresponding so closely with the images of the dream or vision that we are compelled to regard them as a "fulfillment." At this stage the question *does* arise as to what meaning we are to attach to "free will."

It has been argued that when we review any series of past events in our lives, we normally regard them as having been

brought about by voluntary acts on our part. The argument then continues: if we are not compelled to conclude that events in our past life were not predetermined, why should they be predetermined just because the *same events* are seen before they happen?

I agree that logically no inference of predeterminism may be drawn regarding the *same events* seen as past or as future. But on the other hand neither can we conclude that they were *not* predetermined. A determinist might cite plenty of reasons for supposing that the decisions in our past which we regard as having been voluntary, were in fact not so.

A Cosmic Plan

The problem is to bridge the gap between the awareness of the existing "image-pattern" and its actualization. If we conclude that the precognition involves cognizance of future "voluntary" decisions, then the term "voluntary" needs redefining, because if there is an inner plan, it must exercise a compulsive influence, and thereby restrict freedom. It is like saying to a man, you can go where you like as long as you follow the paths on the map. Or greater latitude in the execution of the plan might be conceived if the *goal* were determined but not the paths to it—as if a man were told to exercise his own discretion as to the way he traveled, so long as he ended up at such a place. So at best we would have a limited freedom, and this perhaps is sufficient to satisfy our sense of "free will."

Again, we might save the conception of free will by supposing that the Cosmic Mind modifies Its plan in order to compensate

for interferences due to the exercise of man's free will. This implies a living, changing plan. Then we would have to suppose a Cosmic Mind which permitted Its plans to be thwarted by finite creatures who in their ignorance exercised free will against a plan which presumably would be the ideal one for the Cosmos.

I think the concept of a Cosmic Plan is too useful to lose, but for the purpose of interpreting the phenomena of precognition, I doubt whether we need the concept of a *Cosmic* Plan. It is sufficient if we confine ourselves to local thought-structures which are the result of group and individual thinking. Of course, it may be contended that all these local patterns are embraced within a Cosmic Mind. No doubt this would be a valid conclusion. But I also think if there is a plan at the Cosmic level, it is difficult to conceive of it being an alterable one, merely in order to accommodate the caprices of "free will" behavior on the part of finite creatures.

The word "plan" can be interpreted in two ways: (1) As an existing Reality, and therefore timeless. (2) It may be conceived after the model of human plans, which are more or less tentative and constantly adapted to changing circumstances. This second conception naturally appeals to our common-sense notion of what a plan should be, although a constantly changing plan may end up by being no plan at all, and leave the future wide open for creation.

But to project this common-sense notion into the Cosmic sphere may be entirely misleading. The term Cosmic is usually intended to represent Universal, therefore, all-inclusive, and this means, *as a Whole* unchanging. This applies even if the Cosmic Whole is a "Mind." The thoughts, patterns or plans within such a "Mind" would be existing realities in virtue of Its universality.

All this speculation brings us back to the realization of the danger in attaching too much importance to conceptual frames when applied to "Reality." Perhaps we are getting too much conceptual machinery on our hands. And why? It is because we wish to justify our deeply-rooted faith in our real freedom. I think, therefore, that it might be advisable to examine more closely what we mean by "real freedom" on the part of an individual unit of consciousness.

Relation of the Transcendental Self to the Everyday Self

Let us consider the argument that while for the subliminal self the image-patterns are "Now," the limited or peripheral self has freedom of choice in actualizing them in our time-sequence. But if the image-patterns are part of the awareness of the transcendental self, does this not also imply an awareness of how the limited self will choose to implement the plan or pattern? If so, surely these choices can only by courtesy be called free, as far as *these particular* precognitions are concerned. Even if we say that the transcendental self and the peripheral self are one, and therefore any decisions which determine behavior at the peripheral level are really "ours," the element of compulsion still remains, because what "*Is*" at the level of the transcendental self must, if the precognition is a true one, be actualized no matter how devious and apparently "voluntary" the actions towards fulfillment may seem to be.

Here we see a determinism of the same type as the materialist would postulate. Only instead of the determinism being in terms of psycho-physical factors of the past, the determinism is of a psychological type, in the form of the overpowering influence of the subliminal upon the peripheral consciousness.

I emphasize that at present I am discussing the problem of freedom or determinism *only in connection with true precognitions.* Outside these particular precognitions there may or may not be freedom. This we will consider later.

Freedom and Precognitive Warnings

In this connection we must take cognizance of precognitive warnings. In these cases the events foreseen are avoided because of warnings. Yet it is clear that some events were correctly foreseen, as for instance, in Case 3, where the circumstances which could have caused an accident *were* foreseen, but the accident itself was avoided because of the warning. In such cases what is happening may be something like this: the transcendental self prehends the inner thought-pattern which includes certain events on the road to London, but is able to influence the waking consciousness in such a way that the percipient acts quickly by driving on to "his wrong side" and so avoids a collision with another car which is being driven on *its* wrong side.

The point about this and other similar warnings is not that of freedom or otherwise. The impulse to act quickly was in consequence of the subliminal warning. In other words, it was determined by the subliminal just as much as would have been the case if the precognition had been that of an accident which *had* been fulfilled.

We can therefore conclude that an accident was not part of the pattern of this particular man's manifestation; therefore it was *not allowed* to materialize. The reason why some inner patterns must actualize and others not is determined by the total thought-picture which governs the type of existence an indi-

vidual will live—some may call it his Karma. It will be seen, therefore, that from the point of view of the peripheral self there is just as much determinism in the avoiding of the accident as if the accident had happened.

Free Will or Determinism: Wrong Assumptions

The truth of the matter is that the question of freedom or determinism is insoluble because the assumptions which underlie the discussion are false. Firstly, we postulate an individual persisting self, and then endeavor to reserve for this limited self an area within which it can exercise freedom. But it must be noticed that the limited self for which we claim this freedom is our familiar everyday physically-functioning self. When, however, we examine the governing factors which cause us to act in the ordinary course of living, we find all our actions are determined by motives, and these motives are the result of desires.

Even what we call self-control is often in fact the suppressing of one desire in order to gratify another. A student must deny himself many outings, pleasures and the satisfaction of transient desires, so that he may reap the reward of passing an examination.

Sometimes it is contended that the evidence of our freedom is to be found in our capacity, say, to move our left arm rather than our right, or to think of one number rather than another. But when we consider the circumstances under which we would make just these choices, it is not by any means clear that they would represent free choices. We would not *consciously* move either our right or our left arm without some motive for doing so. Similarly, our freedom to think of any number would be governed by certain preferences, either conscious or subconscious, which in theory could be traceable.

However, it would be unprofitable to pursue this analysis any further, as I believe it is based on misunderstood premises. In my view freedom is a real ingredient of the universe, but it still remains for us to understand what we mean by freedom. Firstly, let us consider further the nature of desire.

The Innate Nature of Desire

The innate nature of desire is to satisfy a sense of incompleteness. It forces us always to look to the future for such satisfactions as we believe will enable our deficiencies to be remedied. Our gaze is towards goals to be reached; the rewards of promotion in our work; more and better possessions; longing for friends, and a desire that they respect or love us. Always is our nature tense in the expectation that the future will open up before us new satisfactions.

Now whatever philosophy we may have regarding the root-craving which governs our activities, it is certain that we cannot be free while under such thralldom. For desire indicates incompleteness; consequently the individual is functioning under conditions of dependence which bind him to those circumstances which he deems will fill the void of his dissatisfaction. If therefore we know what are the specific desires of any individual, we know how he will act in any given set of circumstances. There are many cross-desires which frustrate one another, but in the long run the strongest group of desires will prevail. And does this not add up to a form of psychological determinism? Therefore, to the extent that a man is governed by desire, he is bound.

This applies to the more subtle forms of desire which often masquerade as virtues—ambition and even the desire for "spiritual" attainment, or that our "souls" may be saved. All these

aspects of desire are manifestations of our incompleteness and limitation, and therefore of our subjection to the binding laws which control all limited phenomena.

But what is worse, the unit of consciousness is driven away from the only point where complete satisfaction can be found—the present. The future is compounded of many "presents," so sooner or later one of these "presents" will disclose its contents into our receptive lower consciousness, and this will mean "enlightenment." But what is "enlightenment" except the knowledge of what *Is*? And what Is, is *Now*. Thus, to be governed by desire is to escape from awareness of the *now* which is timeless, and therefore realizable at every moment of time. This is the essence of *Satori* or Enlightenment and in the West takes the form of the mystic vision.

Finally, we draw particular attention to one important psychological aspect of the problem of free will: In spite of all that has been said about our being under various compulsions, and also in spite of the fact that whenever we look back on a series of events they can almost invariably be shown with reasonable certainty to have been determined by either psychological or physical factors, yet when all has been said to the contrary—*we feel free!* This is not just an obstinate refusal to face facts: it is a testimony to an experience which seems basic to our humanity. Surely this is significant, and needs understanding. It brings us to the point where we must examine the meaning of Reality and our personal relationship to it.

Suppose we never awakened from a dream, how would we know that we were dreaming?
Would a stick, seen only through water, ever be known to be straight?

17 *Appearance and Reality*

When we use the word "real" in the dictionary sense, we mean that a thing exists objectively and is not an illusion. In common-sense experience we have little difficulty in distinguishing between real and illusory. But when the word "real" is spelled with a capital letter and becomes "Reality," we are implying a contrast with not-real, or appearance. The question then becomes, what lies behind appearances, and in this context the appearances are those presented by our sense-impressions. Accordingly the question may be transposed into, what lies behind sense-impressions?

This question has been asked in Western philosophy from early Greek times, and was raised specifically by Plato in his allegory of the cave, where the world of sense-impressions was depicted as one of shadows in contrast to the real world outside the cave.

But the problem of Reality has always been crucial for Eastern philosophy and religion, and in the non-dual conceptions of the *Vedanta* the contrast of Reality with appearance is fundamental, and is expressed in the doctrine of *Maya*.

Being and Becoming

The problem can take another form when it is stated as a relationship between Being and Becoming, where Being is the Real and Becoming is the manifestation of Being. All the time we are trying to get behind what we have been forced for a variety of reasons to conclude are only appearances. Even in physical terms, when we say that a "thing" is real in the sense that it persists throughout a series of changing states, we find ourselves up against the same problem. For what is a "thing" as distinct from its changing states? Also, as we have already seen, even the concept that a "thing" exists at all is not demonstrable, for our knowledge is only of sense data.

When, therefore, we try to get behind sense data in order to find out what causes them, we are again confronted with the problem of Reality and Appearance. If we sit back, as it were, and accept the physical world as it appears to be, this only means that we have stopped thinking about the problem, and are content to accept the world at its face value. It would be like living all our lives in a picture-theatre where the images on the screen are accepted as real life.

As it is unlikely that a naive realist would be reading this book, we can proceed on the assumption that the problem of a distinction between Reality and Appearance is realized to be a crucial one both for philosophy and religion. In religious terms, of course, God is the only Reality, and the realms of manifestation rest on God as the Ground of all that exists.

Sameness and Change

We may now formulate the problem by asking the following questions: If we are so constituted as to be confined within the

circle of our sense-impressions, how can we ever know what lies behind them? Or still more to the point, are we really compelled to postulate anything at all behind sense-impressions? To deal with the last question first: There are certain paradoxes in our sense-experience which force us to look elsewhere for a reconciliation of them. For instance, there is an appearance of permanence about what we call "objects," but we cannot pinpoint in what the permanence consists. This even applies to the concept of ourselves as unchanging personalities. John Smith is supposed to be the same throughout his total existence. Yet his appearances do not justify this conclusion. When he was christened he was a tiny creature which could have been carried in a suitcase; and then after a period there appears a being measuring, say, six feet, and weighing about two hundred pounds, with features so different from the tiny being in the cot that if a magician blotted out the intervening changes and presented us with the adult form and claimed it as being the "same" as the creature which was in the cot, we would be startled into a realization of the mystery whereby we attach the label "same" to manifestations differing so much. This applies to all organic forms of growth. We speak of a tree as being the same over a period of two hundred years, yet hardly a particle of the tree when it was a sapling remains.

In spite of the fact that we retain the label "same," we cannot identify any underlying permanence in the "thing" or organism. But the changes are so gradual as to blend into one another, presenting an appearance of permanence, while we know in fact there is no permanence. Yet there is a general form which we recognize as "human" even if a particular form alters. The child has the same number of limbs and other distinguishable characteristics as the adult. And similarly with a tree, it can be distinguished from a vegetable, and all natural phenomena have

their characteristic forms. So we witness the miracle of permanence and change at the same time. And when I say miracle I use the word in order to highlight what is virtually a mystery although a common-place experience. Mechanistic descriptions remain just descriptions, *not* explanations. Thus, as I have said, even the contemplation of physical phenomena raises the problem of what lies behind appearances.

One or Many Selves

The same problem arises when we consider psychological states, and we ask, are individual selves an illusion? But if there are many selves, are they persistent entities? If "things" which appear to be separate may in fact not be so, then may not separate selves be only appearances?

Whenever we look at nature and at all phenomena we find it impossible to put our fingers on boundary-lines which are definite limits of independent existence. A thing which seems to be separate from one point of view is found from another to be related, and therefore dependent on other existences. Nature is an integrated symbiotic Whole.

Behind all our investigations and speculations, however, there is the indubitable awareness of self. All inferences, deductions and reasonings are against a certainty that we exist. The self is indescribable because it is the *subject* and can never be made the *object* of knowledge. To say I know myself is to say I know something other than myself; it would be what William James described as knowing the "me"; or, to put it another way, as knowing that with which the self is identified.

So we ask again, is this self, which is the basis for all our experience, one or many? It is relevant to notice that consciousness

of selfhood does not differ from one person to another—all say "I." May not therefore that which all describe as the same, be the same, and consequently universal? In which case the appearance of many selves would be as one face in many mirrors; the mirrors may be regarded as the phenomenal universe which the Self affirms in order to define its infinitude.

Concepts and Reality

The reader who has read philosophy, especially Eastern philosophy, will know to what lengths speculation can go along these lines. I must confess to a weakness for such speculation, for I believe we should use our conceptual apparatus to the utmost. However, a rather dismal prospect of uncertainty lies behind and indeed ahead of all philosophizing about Reality. Yet a general picture is emerging as the result of speculations over a wide field. The various views, I believe, converge towards those conceptions which see the whole of manifestation as an expression of consciousness. But we must be on our guard against worshipping conceptions and ideas, mistaking these for Reality itself.

There is no harm in forming concepts and ideas so long as we do not take them too seriously. Our rational modes of thinking follow certain well-defined patterns which are inevitable because of the nature of reasoning. The syllogism, for instance, is the logical device whereby we are supposed to proceed from the known to the unknown. But in point of fact all reasoning starts from premises which are self-evident, as of course we all know from Euclid. So, granted the premises, almost anything can be proved in a logical sense. What therefore is of fundamental importance is to come to grips with the nature of our premises.

The bearing of this discussion on the problem of Reality is this: the edifices we build up in thought rest on foundations of non-logical acceptances, and these acceptances which seem self-evident are for the most part based on the assumption that sense data are giving us a direct knowledge of the Real World.

Words

Further we must remind ourselves that words are our tools for thinking. Much reasoning is the manipulation of words. And words are symbols. Symbols of what? Mostly of sense-realities. If we cannot go beyond the words and look directly at the experiences, facts or things which words symbolize, we could be engaged in a nonsensical game of symbol-manipulating without ever coming into contact with anything real. And this precisely is what the semanticists say does happen in certain discussions.

I hope it is now becoming clear that any ideas or concepts *about* Reality cannot be a substitute for Reality itself. How may we transcend the symbol-system designed to describe the world of appearances? How to see the "God" behind the idol?

Consider the folly of using any set of concepts and at the same time describing Reality as being infinite. It is like trying to pour the ocean into a bucket. Can nothing useful be said about Reality? I suppose anything which is said may have its relative value, but I am rather inclined to treat most descriptions of Reality as a species of intellectual game, useful perhaps up to a point, especially to those of us who manage to create for ourselves "insoluble problems." May not this getting into an intellectual tangle be the most valuable service our minds perform in order to bring us face to face with Reality, and exhibit for us the limitations of the logical mind?

What, it may be asked, is meant by "face to face with Reality?" It implies that Reality is contactable in some direct fashion. This means that there are methods of circumventing, as it were, the screen of ideologies, and images *about* Reality. For as we have seen, whatever we think about Reality is unimportant compared with the direct experience of it.

Both in the East and in the West it is stated that we may transcend the intellect and become aware in a manner incomprehensible to the rational mind of a state of Oneness or Wholeness. This we will now consider.

The One and the Many. Is Reality either, or both? So the mind races from definition to definition, worshipping verbal artifacts. But it is in the stillness of awareness, not in the tensions of definition, that the secret Heart of our being discloses the Timeless Mystery in all its simplicity.

18 *Acquaintance with Reality*

There is a vast literature dealing with those who have had unusual experiences, described in the West as mystical and in the East as Enlightenment or *Satori.* Mystical experience purports to disclose the Reality behind appearances.

Confusion of Interpretations

The reader will find a good deal of contradiction in the manner in which different mystics interpret their experiences. But I think it will be agreed that an ineffable state is being contacted. Therefore, when attempts at description are made, the words confuse rather than enlighten. Worse still, the mystic does not engage upon the task of communication without being encumbered by the ideologies and doctrines which have been ingrained in him by education and tradition. These form the moulds into which, as it were, the experience has to be poured. To use an analogy, it is like writing a letter on a typewriter with foreign characters and letters missing. We would have to read "between the lines" to get the meaning, and we would only try to do this if

we were convinced that the writer really had something important to say.

This is the point. We are convinced that the mystics *do* have something important to say, but intellectually they confuse us. There is a tradition in the East which runs:

Those who know do not speak;
Those who speak do not know.

But many *have* spoken; consequently we have to tolerate the intellectual confusion because of the value of the testimony, which carries within itself the authority of those who have "seen."

Unity or Diversity?

We cannot escape a discussion of the mystical experience because the understanding of precognition is dependent on the view we have of Reality. The mystical state is essentially one in which Unity is perceived in all things. The words "oneness" and "unity" are those most often used to describe this deep insight into what is claimed to be Reality. According to the *Vedanta,* it is a state in which no consciousness of duality exists. Such a view contradicts our ordinary sense-experience, which reports a world of separate existences. Which view is the true one? I believe both are true, but to understand this we must consider the problem more fully.

The Vedanta

In the first place, let us examine the doctrine of non-duality in its most extreme form as presented in the *Upanishads* and the

Vedanta. Perhaps the *Vedanta* view may be best expressed in the form of an analogy rather than by quotations from the *Upanishads*.

An Analogy

The normal man may be regarded as one who has spent a lifetime seeing the world only by reflection in the rippled surface of a pond. If this man suddenly turned his back to the pond and saw the world in all its sunlight and clarity, this for him would represent enlightenment. But this is not a perfect analogy of the *Vedanta* view, because even when the man did turn his gaze from the pond, *he still saw a discrete world*. So let us take another analogy.

Imagine that a man is in a forest and has become fascinated by the pattern which the sunlight is making on the forest bed. Before him spreads the delicate tracery of the pattern made by the sun's light as it streams through the branches. There are also moving patches of light and shade; deep avenues of gloom which lure the gaze into mysterious depths.

Suppose that this man, contemplating such a scene in all its changing variety, becomes hypnotized into believing that the pattern on the forest floor is the only Reality.

Under such conditions two revelations would be possible for our hypothetical man, and indeed these revelations would be inevitable at the proper stages of his awakening. The first would be that, in spite of the apparent independent reality of the dancing light and shade upon the ground, it was in fact all due to the broken light playing through the foliage.

The second realization, the deepest and final truth, would be if he experienced identity of Being with the sun itself, and knew that it and his deepest Self were one.

This last statement is a particularly tantalizing one for the intellect. It conflicts with our normal experience. Ordinarily, we regard ourselves as *separate* units of consciousness, whereas the revelation of enlightenment and of the *Vedanta* is that we are *not separate,* but are grounded in a Unity in which separation or multiplicity does not exist.

How can the logical mind make sense of such contradictions? My own intuitive response is that the *Upanishads* are stating the deepest truth. But the *Vedanta* is not a philosophy, nor even a religion in the Western sense of the word. It is a *statement* regarding the non-dual nature of reality. It is submitted to our *intuition,* and only secondarily to our reason. Men, however, being constituted as they are, the *Upanishads* have provoked voluminous speculation and philosophical discussion in the attempt to interpret the uninterpretable.

Non-Definition of Reality

The greatest wisdom lies in defining Reality in negatives: thus *Neti,* not-this, when applied to every phenomenal aspect of the Universe, is more likely to bring us to the point of realization of what *is* than are the intellectual attempts at definition. To know for a certainty what a thing is *not* leaves the mind free *when in the presence of something entirely new.*

Three Questions

There are three questions which have a direct bearing on the phenomena of precognition:

1. Is Reality featureless?

2. Does the *Vedanta* conception of the One Self deprive our separate personal identity of any meaning?

3. What meaning has personal freedom if the Universal Self alone is real?

The answer to the first question is that a doctrine of non-dual Reality cannot without contradiction make any statement regarding the status of phenomena within a Reality which *ex hypothesis* is non-dual. Yet in fact the phenomenal universe is accepted as having a dependent reality. It is an imagined opposite to the Self. It is, shall we say, the postulation of multiplicity on the part of the Self, so that in the picture of opposites the Supreme discloses its infinite possibilities. Here again we find the same principle of knowing what one *is*, by realizing what one is *not*.

The direct answer to the first question is that while nothing implying definition can be stated about Ultimate Reality—it just *is*—and must be contacted by means other than the mind, yet inasmuch as the Universe is manifested, it is a multiplicity, and consequently possesses features.

The answers to the second and third questions cannot be quite as straightforward as we would like them to be, and may be discussed together.

Examination of a Mystical Experience

Perhaps we had better look closely at one mystical experience. It so happens that I have with me as I write someone who has had this experience. So I will set out in dialogue form my questions and the answers exactly as I receive them.

§ Question. When you had your experience of Unity with others, did you lose all sense of your own identity?

Answer. No. I was deeply conscious of being myself all through the experience.

Ques. What then do you mean when you say you felt yourself as being *one* with the large number of people who were also present?

Ans. Immediately I directed my thought towards any individual, I knew him to be myself just as surely as *I* was myself.

Ques. Were the people with whom you experienced Unity those in special relationship to you—say particular friends?

Ans. No. My sense of unity had nothing to do with normal relationships. I seemed as one with everybody I had ever known. *They were myself.*

Ques. You say that all the various persons were yourself, yet you speak of different individuals. How do you explain this?

Ans. I can't explain it.

Ques. Were you dreaming?

Ans. Definitely, no.

Ques. Which is most real for you—your "vision" or your everyday experiences?

Ans. The vision.

Ques. You mean that it is truer to regard all the persons of your vision as one—in fact your own self—rather than as separate individuals?

Ans. They were one with me in this sense: whenever my attention was directed toward any individual, I felt that individual to be myself. §

This sense of unity is typical of the mystical experience in general. In this case persons were involved. In others unity is realized with nature, or natural objects, as in the case of Aldous Huxley. This, I suggest, largely depends on the direction of attention and temperament of the individual. But always an under-

lying unity is sensed, and this is more real than the separateness of normal experience.

However, notice that *persons* and natural phenomena do not disappear. There is *not* an obliteration of differences, they have their existence; yet, if I may so express it, they are drenched in the Unity of some deeper aspect of their being. This is the case where the unity is with natural things. The differences persist even though a sense of unity is seen to underlie them. The following is an instance of unity with the external world from my friend M. K. She was going through a period of great strain. One afternoon she was out walking when suddenly she was transported into what seemed to her to be another world:

§ I had the sensation of being turned into some other person as if by an unseen magical influence that was causing both myself and the landscape to change in an unbelievable way. An exquisite, unearthly vibration was sweeping through me. The world as I knew it had fallen away in a second of time (actually while crossing a tramline), giving place to a new heaven on earth.

I was looking at the same familiar landscape, yet every part of it was changed from its usual appearance. Everywhere I looked was lit with a peculiar beauty palpitating in shimmering loveliness. Each blade of grass was lit from within and gave forth an essence of enchantment harmonizing with heightened beauty in everything around me.

It was as if some unknown alchemy had been at work blending and *uniting all with my own being* in a joyousness and tranquility I had never known before. A radiance shone forth from the leaves of every shrub and tree. The flowers were exquisite in their beauty, form and color. The sky shimmered in a blaze of golden light blending with the atmosphere. §

I have underlined the phrase "uniting all with my own being." Here again we note the sense of unity, but not the obliteration of natural features.

I draw attention also to the suddenness of the experience. It occurred "in a second of time." This reminds us of Warner Allen's mystical experience which he relates in his book *The Timeless Moment* (1946). His experience, he estimates, took no longer than the interval between "two demi-semi-quavers." He was at the time listening to Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*. Yet in that flash of time the mystery of "Union with God" was revealed to him. As in the experience which I have reported above in the form of question and answer, the vision came with startling suddenness.

Another Example of Nature Mysticism

I will cite one more case from my own records. This is very similar to that of M. K. above. It is from Mr. Fred Wood of England. He writes:

§ I prayed for help from out of my darkness, and there, behold, as a flash, the scene changed. All became alive, the trees, the houses, the very stones became animated with life, and all became vibrant with the light within them. All breathed effulgent light, vivid sparkling light, radiating out and in every direction; and not only that, but *everything seemed to be connected with everything else.* (My italics.) Although all separate forms, and all vibrating with their own intensity of life, yet they all seemed to be connected by their vibrations into one whole thing, as the different colored parts of a picture are yet of the same picture, although when one is near to it each different object can be viewed separately.

So in the same way with natural objects—by which I mean every common and ordinary thing of which we are conscious, including our own bodies—they are but parts of one intensive radiant activity, every particle endowed with life and with light of a quality that cannot be conceived of, for although of the power of the arc lamp, there is no sense of glare or strain. §

Here, again, we have an account of Unity within diversity. What conclusions may we draw from the above and other similar cases?

The Meaning of these Cases:
Their relation to Precognition and Psi Phenomena

I think cases such as the above are of direct significance for an interpretation of precognition. They indicate that the physical world is a segmented aspect of a unified Whole. Our failure to see this is because the sharpness of sensory focus is essential for efficient functioning at the physical level.

All paranormal experiences require some degree of dissociation from the physical organism. When for a variety of reasons consciousness is freed from our normally acute sensory attention, the wider awareness of our subliminal self manifests.

Our brain, like a camera, needs only a pin-point of light to obtain a sharp picture. We cannot see the landscape as a whole if our eyes remain glued to the view-finder of a camera. So it is with precognition: a total picture exists, but only one scene, perhaps, is flashed into consciousness.

The terms telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and so on, are those we attach at the discrete level of awareness to the apprehension of phenomena which are integrated Wholes of unities on another plane of Being. Telepathy, for instance, need not be

regarded as the "transference" of thought, but probably is the becoming aware of aspects of a situation which, although it appears to be composed of separate elements, may in reality be one Whole. Similarly with clairvoyance. It is almost certainly not a "seeing" over an area of space, but could be much more intelligibly explained as being a perception of integrated relationships on the subliminal level.

If this is not regarded as an explanation, it is because an "explanation" is always an attempt to relate the phenomenon to be explained to another frame of reference which has previously been accepted by us. If, for instance, a flower were buried in an opaque solution and we could see only the apparently separate tips of the petals, and supposing we had never seen it in its wholeness, then we would need an "explanation" to account for what would seem to us to be a peculiar connection between the separate phenomena of petal-tips. However, when the flower is seen as a whole, all the separate phenomena need no explanation. The situation is obvious and simple. So Warner Allen, under the influence of his mystical experience, exclaims:

§ Something has happened to me—I am utterly amazed—can this be that? (That being the answer to the riddle of life.) But it is too simple—I always knew it—it is remembering an old forgotten secret—like coming home—I am not "I," not the "I" I thought—there is no death . . . §

Another View of Mysticism

Those whose minds run to theological terminology describe their experience as being union with God. But many non-religious mystics merely testify to the experience of unity with all that exists. In these latter cases it seems to be nature with which

the sense of unity is experienced, as we have seen in the cases above related. Attempts have been made to classify this type of mysticism as of a lower order than that in cases where the experiment expresses union with God. Professor R. C. Zaehner, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford, in his book, *Mysticism; Sacred and Profane* (1957) draws just such a conclusion. Professor Zaehner has himself experienced the state called mystical, and this in my view adds considerable value to anything he has to say on the subject. Commenting on Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (1927) he says:

§ I know that as far as the normal rational consciousness is concerned, he is talking horrid gibberish, but I equally know that I have myself experienced precisely this and the joy experienced as a result of this uncontrollable and inexplicable expansion of the personality is not to be brushed aside as mere illusion. §

Indeed, he continues: " . . . the ordinary world of sense experience seems pathetically unreal."

This sense of the comparative unreality of the ordinary world is the testimony common to mystics. Aldous Huxley, as is well known, had his experience as the result of taking mescalin, and it will be remembered that William James had a similar experience through taking nitrous oxide.

Here let me interpose that the mystical experience is not *caused* by the taking of mescalin or any other drug. The experience depends on the man; not on the drug. It may be conceded that a drug under certain circumstances could release the consciousness from its focus in the brain, but what happens after that depends on the quality of the total personality of the individual; his interests and outlook in general. This is borne out by the fact that while some experiences under mescalin may be significant,

others are trivial. It would be rather fantastic if we could storm the "Kingdom of Heaven" by means of a drug!

Precognition and Reality

In our attempts to understand precognition we have conveyed a picture of a universal Whole in which all events and contingent facts have some sort of existence prior to their manifestation on this plane.

This picture is, I believe, basically a true one and the logic of this conception would lead to the conclusion that nothing new can occur within the Universe *as a whole*. Yet for individuals, novelty, or as it is usually expressed, creativeness, does manifest. But, we stress, *novelty only for us*. The Supreme is all-inclusive, and nothing can be added to it; therefore the appearance of novelty would be due to our apprehension of inner patterns being expressed through our consciousness.

One further thought may be added. There may be in the Cosmic Mind what might be described as a "realm of possibilities." Whether or not any of these possibilities manifest on our plane may involve a choice at a "high level" and be dependent on factors beyond our comprehension. The point I make is that even "possibilities" would, on our hypothesis, exist as present realities. This idea regarding Reality redeems it from rigidity. In fact, rigidity has no meaning if the Supreme is conceived as a conscious Whole.

A Mechanical Model

Perhaps at this point some concession to our tendency to think about ultimate problems in terms of mechanical models should

be made. We have been compelled by the data of precognition to postulate an existent status for events in what may be conveniently described as an "Eternal Now." We conceive these eternal patterns as mental. However, it might help if we took as an analogy modern techniques of tape-recording. Incidentally, technological constructions over and over again illustrate mechanical adaptations of principles already found in nature. If therefore it helps, we may imagine a universal cosmic library after the form of tape-recordings. One feature which may make this simile less misleading is this: a tape-record is latent until it is transposed into terms of human consciousness. Similarly, the Cosmic record only becomes dynamic when it is due to impinge on the human consciousnesses which are the media for its manifestation. The Hindu doctrine of *Karma* may be imagined to operate in some such manner, for the law of *Karma* implies that an individual is re-born surrounded by thought-patterns which form the milieu of each incarnation.

Extend the analogy further, and suppose the tape-record is out of Time, and therefore from our point of view includes the future. Then we have a model which at least may make cosmic patterns thinkable, but at all costs let us not take the analogy too literally. Actually the idea of a Cosmic record is a very ancient one, as is evidenced by the Hindu doctrine of the *Akashic* records.

Personal Survival

It may seem that our discussion has taken us into realms having little application to our humdrum daily lives. But to regard it in this manner would be to miss the point. We are dealing with that which is most intimate—our Self. But if the Self is

universal, although appearing under limited aspects, then we have the assurance of immortality.

It may be argued that this may not be personal survival; that is to say, the persistence after death of a recognizable individual. Why not? The particular manifestation we call a personal self is due to the identification of the Universal Self with specific forms. Therefore, inasmuch as the Universal Self has cognizance of any phenomenon, this phenomenon is part of the Universal Self's timeless awareness and therefore immortal. In theological language, we are immortal because God knows us.

The individual, as both infinite and finite, becomes a microcosm. The Infinite and Undivided Whole, being inexhaustible, requires multitudinous forms for its expression. So we may suppose that every unit of manifestation has its unique aspect, which is never lost in a featureless infinity, but is embraced by it. And it, is ourself!

When the individual glimpses in precognition parts of a timeless pattern, he is having an intimation of the nature of Reality in which all things inhere. What part of the total picture will find expression in the life of a particular individual is governed by what has gone before in his past. And this past must be conceived to stretch over many bodily expressions. This follows because each item of multiplicity is a *multum in parvo*. A microcosm, therefore, is simultaneously both Whole and parts; infinite and finite. Consequently always the same, yet ever changing; ever dying and being re-born. So in the midst of the changing there emerges the immortal and unchanging in the form of ecstasy and the mystical vision.

And again we ask, what of freedom? We are both bound and free, for no unit of manifestation commences a round of expression with raw materials entirely without qualities. The artist is

limited by the nature of his paints and the sculptor by his stone. The individual is also confronted by the thought-patterns which surround him at birth, limit his expression, and bind him to circumstances.

We suffer from many illusions, but none so persistent as the one which makes us believe that happiness comes from seeking it.

19 *Living in the Present*

General Conceptions and Daily Life

All actions and attitudes in our practical affairs stem from general conceptions regarding the universe in which we live. These conceptions may not be openly expressed or even clearly formulated to ourselves; nevertheless they exist as a background against which our daily lives are lived. My aim in this chapter is to bring into the focus of daily living the implications of the views we have outlined in the foregoing chapters.

No doubt many readers will have had in mind questions such as, why should certain people have had precognitive experiences? Was it inevitable that some people should go through certain experiences, or meet particular individuals (as I believe was so in my own and other similar cases)?

A reasonable conclusion to form from such precognitions is that the general pattern of our lives is governed from within; that we are not born into this life by chance. I am fully aware of the difficulty many people have in accepting the doctrine of preexistence or of reincarnation. And I know that this doctrine is

often expressed in terms too naive to be credited. Yet the arguments in its favor are very compelling and gain strength if "layers of consciousness" are accepted as already discussed. Also the doctrine illumines many problems when we try to understand why there should be a universe at all, including our particular existence. My purpose in this chapter is to indicate an attitude to life which would seem to be the corollary of the general thesis of this book. I have called it *living in the present*. It is in fact a very deep attitude, and not the happy-go-lucky mood of so many who live for the day and let the future "go hang."

Explanations and Understanding

The general assumption which underlies our normal behavior is that what we are now is due to what we have been in the past, or what has been done to us, say in the form of heredity and environment. If we believe in reincarnation we may extend this reference into indefinite past periods. So we seek to explain why we were born wealthy, poor, crippled or healthy, and so on. All this admittedly gives us a measure of intellectual satisfaction. Most of us seek "explanations"—even tentative ones. To live in an entirely inexplicable universe is intellectually intolerable.

The question which sooner or later demands an answer is this: do "explanations" based on reference to the past hinder our understanding of events as they are happening *now*? Is there, in other words, a conflict between explanations and understanding? An explanation, as we have already said, is an act of dovetailing the new into a body of concepts already accepted, and is largely a matter of accurate defining. But understanding, as I use the word, implies insight into that which "stands under."

To extract the full significance of any experience we have to look at it directly in *our present*. To do otherwise is to escape from the only moment in which it can be understood. The past is composed of an infinite string of "presents," but it is only in *this* present that we can act and understand. There is a deceptive simplicity about this statement, but it embodies a whole philosophy for living. The timeless universe exists within the *moment of our immediate awareness*. The mystical experience illustrates this.

The Mystery of the Present

In point of fact the "present" is very mysterious. Its mystery consists in the fact that it is the only point whence we can enter the Timeless State. This means that we must *penetrate the present in depth*. The normal tendency is to allow the past to absorb the present before we have observed it. Living for the future also causes the present to "slip through our fingers." The beauty which is evoked by the perception of a flower is timeless, and the esthetic joy we feel arises from a direct contemplation in the present, with no reference to past or future.

But it will be asked, how can we in a practical sense live only in the present? At every moment our past experience is guiding us in our present activities, and plans for the future have to be made. What sort of creatures would we be if we lived only for the moment? Yet somehow we do seem to respond to the Biblical injunction, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these."

What, in practice, does such a statement mean? At least the impression is brought home to us that this is no doctrine of drift

—that indeed something very profound is being said. As a matter of brute psychological fact we never experience either the past or the future. The present is our only reality, and failure to pay attention to it is the root-cause of unhappiness.

If the past experience and plans for the future intrude into our present, they must do so in such a way that we maintain a detached attitude towards them. They must never be allowed to color the shaft of our penetrating attention to the reality of the here-now.

Those who know the present in its deepest sense are cured of desire for the future, either in this life or in any other. Nor are their creative efforts frustrated by the burden of past experience. Living in the present means that we have an intuitive contact with the timeless heart of our own being.

Trances and Mysticism

When reading accounts of the mystical experience we might get the impression that it is a matter of periodic trances and visions, or in the East that this profound contact with reality can only be reached as the result of asceticism. This in my view is a distortion of the meaning of mysticism and of the goal to which it is supposed to lead. The testimony of the enlightened is to disclose a timeless state. As we have already seen, the state is ineffable, although realizable. But what other implications follow? Surely that what is Timeless is eternally present—yes, in our present!

Whatever visions or paranormal disclosures of Reality may be vouchsafed to us, the general import of their message is clear —it is that Reality is not in some other world. Reality is one and undivided; it is only the partiality of our view-point which causes us to regard this world as unreal. At any moment we may realize

the timelessness of Reality while in the midst of the time-sequence which limitation imposes upon us. Perhaps this is what Krishnamurti means by "choiceless awareness." Why should we choose when we have only to realize what *is*? This is what I mean by the phrase "to penetrate the present in depth." It implies close attention to what is happening to us.

Two Attitudes Towards Past and Future

Let us note two attitudes towards the past and the future which resemble one another, yet differ subtly. The first attitude is one where the past occupies the center of consciousness and in the form of experience controls activity. Similarly, plans and desires for their fulfillment draw the mind towards the future. This might be described as being the normal state of our consciousness functioning in the physical world. It is a state where we live distractedly between the two eternities of the past and the future.

There is, however, another attitude which may be cultivated, and indeed is a condition for mental health and happiness. It is what I have called "living in the present." But it means living in the present in a particular manner. It does not involve ignoring the past or failing to recognize the need for plans; but we recognize them for what they are, a sequence of events in which we participate, but with which we do not become identified.

We depersonalize past events and future plans so that they cease to be *ours*. We can review our past, and plans for the future, as we would normally do if we were considering another person's past or future. Indeed this is a prior condition for even normal efficiency. Too close an association with *our* plans can blind us to their weaknesses. But the attitude of detachment means far more

than this. It certainly would be a travesty if we cultivated detachment in order to become efficient!

The essential condition for mental peace is not to seek it, but to free ourselves from identification with the external sequences which engulf us if we let them. We have to "sit back" and become the spectator of our own activities and inner states. It does not involve long periods devoted to meditation or asceticism. Penetrative awareness in the present moment *is a meditation.* Special meditations may be practiced not in order to "attain" but only to remove obstacles in the way of realization. "To be in the world but not of it" is a much-quoted phrase, but as is so often the case with wise sayings and proverbs, familiarity blunts for us their deep meaning.

The subtlety of this view could easily escape us. It is only as we practice poised and alert detachment that it becomes apparent that here is the recipe for happiness—not a happiness to be sought, but one which comes inevitably because we have transcended the tyranny of Time. In a sense *we* have no future, for our roots are out of Time. The whole of the discussion of this book culminates in this statement. Wisdom in living is the realization of this truth.

Striving for Enlightenment

It is a truth which has its revolutionary aspects. It cuts across much that is called spiritual aspiration. Those in the East and the West who direct their energies towards "spiritual" attainment are virtually perpetuating themselves in time. To want *to be* is to deny what we *are.* Even the craving for personal survival after death weakens our grip on the present, which is the only point where evidence of our immortality may be found. Personal sur-

vival is an irrelevancy compared with immortality—the Timeless State.

All striving for "enlightenment" and for "spiritual attainment" is evidence of a malaise which holds us to a time-sequence and veils from us the splendor of the ineffable Reality.

The whole argument of this book leads to a contemplation of the universe as a conscious Whole, and our freedom lies in our realization of this fact. The seers, the saints, and the "liberated" of our time could have been quoted extensively in support of this thesis. But to do so would be to invoke authorities and leave us still embedded in the time-series; and what is worse perhaps, encourage us to believe that "salvation" was something to be attained in the future, and then only after certain practices had been performed, or because we had accepted particular doctrines. Reality does not wait upon evolution for its disclosure. It is *here* and *now*. Character, knowledge and personal attainments may color its mode of expression, but not its Truth, even as a man may love regardless of his intellectual development.

To give an analogy: consider a number of people living on various floors of a building with all blinds drawn. Any one of them may draw aside a blind and see the outer world, regardless of which floor he may be on. So may we, regardless of our stage of evolution, perceive Reality *in the present* which is our only way out of time.

The question may perhaps arise as to why some people should draw the blinds at all, while others live contentedly within the confines of the rooms which to them represent reality. We could answer that a process of inner growth is involved which brings them to the point of dissatisfaction with a restricted viewpoint. It does seem, as a matter of experience, that some people are mature and intuitive while others are dull and immersed in desire. The explanation of these palpable facts of personal dif-

ferences has certainly nothing to do with education or culture, for some who are illiterate have deep insight, while shallowness is to be found even among the highly educated.

Selfishness and the Universal

Does this seem to be a selfish concentration on oneself? Note the word "oneself," with implication of a limited self existing as a separate entity. But the view we are expressing is that such a separate *entity* is an illusion. That which appears as a separate existent is a phenomenal fact, and the selfness which is associated with it is due to identification of the Universal Self with a particular phenomenal appearance. "Selfishness," therefore, in the usual derogatory sense of the term, is an attachment to "a part" which is masquerading as the Whole. It is a narcissistic tendency to fall in love with a particular reflection of that which is Universal. If at times the "I" seems associated with only a pin-point of physical sensation, it may at other times become one with all that is.

The Relative Value of Ideas

Can we, by acquiring ideas or beliefs, become awakened to Reality—the Timeless State? I suggest the question answers itself, especially in the light of what has been said in previous chapters. This is clearly realized in Zen Buddhism, where mere doctrine is regarded as an obstacle to the direct insight which is *Satori.* To use an analogy, if a man were in an abnormally prolonged dream, his need would be to awaken and not continue under the subjection of the stream of dream-ideas. This may not be dissimilar to our own state.

Yet, *on their plane,* ideas are important, for some are liberating and broadening, while others are narrow and cause fanaticism. To the extent therefore, that we can broaden the base of our intellectual life, ideas must be the instrumental factors which can bring us to the horizon of the intellect's limit, and at least remove obstacles which separate us from true insight.

Religious Organizations

The essence of religion is to express the relationship of man to God. The recognition of this truth should be the solvent for all human differences, especially those of color and race. But historically, religions have been a primary factor in dividing mankind. The reasons for this are not obscure. Organizations have dominated the religious scene; consequently doctrines and beliefs have usurped the pace of true religious insight. Intellectual statements in the form of creeds and doctrines can never bring us to the sanctuary of the religious experience. They represent attempts to define the indefinable and must be treated as intellectual exercises, of service as the means of verbal communication—provided the minor role they play is realized.

If religion is regarded only as the propagation of doctrines, or even the performance of charity, then it will continue to spawn a multitude of organizations in rivalry with one another, creating the confusion of Babel among mankind. Love and compassion, which are the direct outcome of the realization of Unity, cannot be produced in the factories of organizations.

Conclusion

This book, which started with a discussion of the phenomena of precognition, has ended with an outline of a way of life. There

is no anomaly in this, for the phenomena of precognition themselves relentlessly drove us into a consideration of the nature of Reality. It became apparent that the root of our being was not something abstract but was a deeper aspect of ourself; that, indeed, we and Reality are One. Clearly such a view causes a way of life to emerge almost automatically. What this way is I have endeavored to convey in this last chapter. It is a way of happiness, and above all, of freedom. But to realize freedom is to transcend the time-sequence. As we have seen, the whole of manifestation is conceived in terms of thought-patterns within the Cosmic consciousness. Thus we may understand the phenomena of precognition, but much more besides, for such a view brings us face to face with the intuitive awareness of our identity with the Universe as a living Whole.

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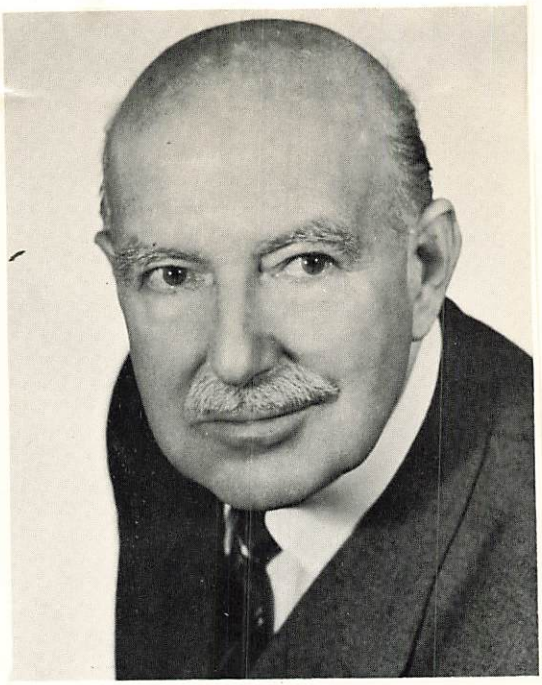

ARTHUR W. OSBORN

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